

Contemplating Connection:  
A Feminist Pastoral Theology of Connection for Korean Christian Immigrant  
Parent-Child Relationships

A Dissertation  
presented to  
the Faculty of the  
Claremont School of Theology

In Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

By  
Jin Sook Kwon  
May 2011

© 2011

Jin Sook Kwon

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



**CLAREMONT**  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

This Dissertation, written by

**Jin Sook Kwon**

under the direction of her Faculty Committee and approved by its members,  
has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of  
Claremont School of Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

Faculty Committee:

Kathleen J. Greider, Chairperson  
K. Samuel Lee  
Monica A. Coleman  
Susan L. Nelson

Interim Academic Dean: Philip Clayton

May 2011

## ABSTRACT

### Contemplating Connection: A Feminist Pastoral Theology of Connection for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

This dissertation offers a feminist pastoral theological reflection about connection between Korean Christian immigrant parents and their children. Parenting is a challenge in any circumstance. However, Korean Christian immigrant families face combined challenges, including Korean cultural interpretations of parenting, the experience of immigration, and certain theological/biblical interpretations of the parent-child relationship, all of which exacerbate disconnection between Korean Christian immigrant parents and their children. Literature addressing the theory and practice of helping Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships is not readily available due to the marginalized nature of this group: they are neither Korean nor American. The Korean Christian immigrant family is largely absent from theoretical and practice-oriented literature in numerous disciplines.

Utilizing Carrie Doehring's feminist pastoral theological method, this dissertation draws on a critical analytical literature review and clinical vignettes to build a cultural, psychological, biblical, and theological foundation for constructing a feminist pastoral theology of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Through a dialogical process, I analyze three Korean traditional values of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* with three core concepts from Relational Cultural Theory: mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity. From this dialogue, interrelating values of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* are proposed as recommended values for the multicultural living of Korean Christian immigrant families as they strive to foster



connection. This dissertation serves as a resource for those offering care and counsel to Korean Christian immigrant families.

Through research, dialogue, and argument, a new feminist pastoral theology of connection is proposed. This connection is made through interrelating values of Mutual Respect, Transformative suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*, which are multiple, fluid, changing, and justice-oriented. Based upon the feminist pastoral theological reflection on connection, more culturally attuned pastoral care is suggested and developed through the use of ritual, religious education, psychoeducational groups, and pastoral counseling. The psychoeducational groups and pastoral counseling suggested in this research combine the use of the aforementioned interrelating values, model of Relational Cultural Theory constructed for counseling of ethnic minority clients, and Howard J. Clinebell, Jr.'s growth model. Through these resources, this dissertation constructs a more socially, culturally, psychologically, and theologically located pastoral theology, pastoral care, and pastoral counseling for marginalized Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It fills me with joy to acknowledge the many people to whom I am indebted for the birthing of this project. In retrospect, I cannot imagine how I could possibly have finished this project without many people's support, love, patience, and prayers.

First of all, I would like to show my deep heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Kathleen J. Greider. She has been my advisor for 10 years during my studies at Claremont School of Theology, both in my Master of Divinity and Ph.D. degrees. Dr. Greider is spiritually centered, academically rigorous, and strives to liberate marginalized students like me with such tender care and a deep listening spirit. I appreciate her dedication to a feminist sense of mutuality in her teaching, supervision, and collegiality. Without her, I do not believe I would be able to actualize my full potential as a teacher, counselor, and as a person.

I have also been blessed to work with Dr. K. Samuel Lee as a member of my dissertation committee. When I started my clinical residency program, I prayed, "I wish I could have both a Korean and an American counseling experience in L.A." And a year later, Dr. Lee arrived as Executive Director of the Clinebell Institute for Pastoral Counseling and Psychotherapy. Since the time I started my clinical residency at the Clinebell Institute and then began working as a staff counselor, Dr. Lee has been supporting, teaching, and supervising using not only his Korean American expertise but his deep pastoral heart. He has guided me as a biculturally competent teacher, counselor, and person. Without this love, care, and teaching, I would have not gained such an

advanced level of knowledge about bicultural existence and relationships, and its theological influence.

I also deeply appreciate Dr. Monica A. Coleman's warm support toward my dissertation process. It must be a hard place for Dr. Coleman to have stepped into. My former dissertation committee member, Dr. Susan Nelson, passed away while I was finishing the first draft of this dissertation. While her passing was somewhat expected due to a serious brain cancer which developed aggressively, it must not have been easy for Dr. Coleman to step into Dr. Nelson's position on my committee. I sense her deep respect for Dr. Nelson as well as her deep sense of support for my process. Thank you, Dr. Coleman.

I am also tremendously thankful for the contributions and support of Dr. Susan Nelson during the first stage of my dissertation journey. I studied human healing and suffering from a feminist perspective with her. She taught me how to understand human suffering and healing theologically and she lived her life as an example. She exemplified how to live as a mother who balanced her family and her work. Without her encouragement, I would have given up in the face of dealing with the complexities of Korean cultural traditions and feminist psychology.

Throughout my dissertation writing process, I realize that without the scholarship of many theologians I would not be able to finish the project in the way I wanted. I have been rendered in debt to all theologians who dedicated their life for Minjung Theology, Korean indigenous theology, and current Korean scholars and counselors for pastoral care and counseling, as well as Relational Cultural theorists, feminist theologians, and especially feminist pastoral theologians. I cannot name each scholar, but I express my

appreciation to the many people who struggle with similar topics and with a similar hope toward the liberation and healing of marginalized people. It is an important theological task. Without all these people's dedication, I cannot even think about actualizing my project.

If I do have a home away from home it consists of Claremont School of Theology, with its ties to Claremont Graduate University, my two Korean American churches in the States, and The Clinebell Institute. First, I offer my appreciation to Happy Methodist Church which God allowed my husband and me to plant and raise for six years. I am so privileged to serve as God's servant, and this hands-on pastoral experience transformed my pastoral theology and care from a theoretical perspective to a practical perspective. Also, at Holliston United Methodist Church (Dream Church Ministry) I have served as a pastoral counseling staff person for the past five years. Without their support, I might not have been able to shape my current pastoral identity. Finally, The Clinebell Institute helped to transform me into the scholar and person I am now. In meeting different clients, I meet myself, my family, my enemy, and God's endless grace and love. My clinical experiences allow me to be a true human not in terms of perfectionism but in terms of acceptance. I think now I can accept things as they are. Also, I am truly indebted to all of my clients as they trusted in me and shared their journeys with me. I am so indebted by their mutuality and their belief in me as one of their partners in life's journey.

My friends have been an important part of my identity formation and growth. Especially, my best friends, mentors, and colleagues Hyun Sun Oh and Sangtae Hong, helped my sanity in the midst of the lonely life of a Ph.D. student. Shared laughter and tears made my life more joyful and meaningful. Also, my friends Bumchul Choi and

Eunsook Kim provided pastoral care during the time when I needed it most. My children were very happy to be loved by this couple's heartfelt care and love as I finished my dissertation drafts. While finishing my dissertation, I realized that I was already living out my scholarship as I struggled to develop connections in light of humanity's many complexities. My Clinebell colleague and friend, Jill Snodgrass, has been modeling what a true friendship is like for me. I am richly blessed by these wonderful friends. The Clinebell Institute has afforded me many friends and colleagues over the years. I hold deep in my heart the love and support that so many have offered and am honored that the number includes too many kind hearts to name here.

Also, I extend my deep respect and appreciation for both my parents-in-law and my parents for their trust, support, care, and love. I am especially grateful to my father-in-law, a retired Korean Methodist bishop, for his constant loving care that maintained my warmth and sanity. Also, my mother-in-law's endless love and care made my life much easier to maintain. My own parents' deep trust, prayers, and love make me centered in my calm spirituality and this source of spirituality has been a great power to me on this journey. Also, my sisters' voices, gifts, and cheerful laughter always make me feel at home.

Finally, my husband Sukmihn Hong, and my two children, Jane and Ashley, are the living source of my life. Living lonely in the States as an immigrant family, I have constantly endeavored to create a loving home. However, the harsh reality as a busy Ph.D. student, minister, and counselor has not always allowed me to be fully present with my family. Yet, they have been a constant source of comfort, joy, and happiness during my writing process. "Honey, Jane, Ashley, Thank you and I love you."

I confess that my life is given by God. Thank you, God, for allowing me such wonderful joy in my life. From my pastoral theological training and my efforts to live this insight in my life, I now truly understand that life is beautiful. Not because everything is actually beautiful, but because no matter what happens, it has been a time for grace, prayer, and love. Even though I sometimes don't understand the cause of my suffering, life is beautiful in that anything can happen!!!

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	iii
List of Figures.....	xiv
Chapter 1. Introduction .....	1
The Problem.....	4
Statement of the Core Problem .....	4
Discussion of the Core Problem .....	5
Thesis and Flow of the Argument .....	14
Thesis .....	14
Flow of the Argument.....	14
Methodology: Feminist Pastoral Theological Method .....	18
Audience .....	20
Scope and Limitations.....	21
Definitions of Terms .....	22
Originality and Contribution.....	25
Chapter 2. Review of Literature on Korean Christian Immigrant Parent Child Relationship .....	26
The Traditional Korean Parent-Child Relationships.....	26
Traditional Korean Family.....	27
Confucian Goals for Child Rearing .....	30
Three Types of Korean Parent-Child Relationships .....	35
Korean Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships.....	41

Korean Immigrant Families in Transition.....	41
Immigration and Family .....	44
Acculturation in the Korean Immigrant Family.....	47
Dissonance and Disconnection in Korean Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships.....	53
Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships .....	54
Protestant Church: Sanctuary and Cultural Trap .....	55
Pastoral Theological Reflections on Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships .....	58
Conclusion .....	67
Chapter 3. Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships: Interrelating Cultural and Psychological Influences.....	70
Why Does Disconnection Matter? .....	71
Relational Cultural Theory .....	72
The Separate Self .....	74
The Relational Self .....	76
The Development of Women's Sense of Self.....	77
The Emergence of Importance of the Mother-Daughter Relationships.....	81
Relational Cultural Parenting: More Relational and More Differentiated .....	84
Connection in RCT .....	86
Disconnection in RCT.....	90
Limitations of RCT .....	96
What Connections Do We Need for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships .....	100
Dialogue with Multi-Concepts for Connections for People Living	



in Multicultures.....	100
RCT's Mutuality and <i>Hyo</i> .....	102
Mutuality .....	102
<i>Hyo</i> .....	106
Dialogue with RCT's Mutuality and <i>Hyo</i> .....	109
RCT's Vulnerability and <i>Han</i> .....	121
Vulnerability .....	121
<i>Han</i> .....	123
Dialogue with RCT's Vulnerability and <i>Han</i> .....	126
RCT's Authenticity and <i>Jeong</i> .....	134
Authenticity.....	134
<i>Jeong</i> .....	135
Dialogue with RCT's Authenticity and <i>Jeong</i> .....	141
Navigating the Bi/Multicultural Connections for Korean Christian Immigrant Families.....	149
Mutual Respect (Mutuality+ <i>Hyo</i> ).....	152
Transformative Suffering (Vulnerability+ <i>Han</i> ).....	152
Authentic <i>Jeong</i> (Authenticity+ <i>Jeong</i> ).....	153
Conclusion .....	156
Chapter 4. Biblical Reflections on Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships.....	160
The Importance of the Bible for the Marginalized .....	163
The Importance of Non-Western and Non-Christian Traditions in the Bible ....	168
The Importance of Korean Cultures in Re-Reading Genesis 22:1-19 .....	173

A Story of <i>Hyo, Han, and Jeong</i> .....	175
Becoming a Different Story in a Different Culture .....	186
A New Story with New Culturally Interrelating Values.....	198
Scene 1: God’s command .....	199
Scene 2: Abraham’s Sharing of God’s Command with Sarah .....	200
Scene 3: Abraham and Sarah’s Agreement to Share God’s Command with Isaac .....	200
Scene 4: Family Trip to Mt. Moriah .....	200
Scene 5: Arrival at Mt. Moriah .....	200
Scene 6: Long Silence at Mt. Moriah .....	201
Scene 7: Isaac’s Lonely Thoughts .....	201
Scene 8: Isaac’s Request to Pray to God .....	201
Scene 9: Isaac’s Initiation to Sacrifice Himself .....	202
Scene 10: Abraham and Sarah’s Decision Making.....	202
This Story Ends, but Is Open for a Multitude of Possible Endings .....	203
Conclusion .....	205
Chapter 5. Theological Reflections on Multiplicity for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships .....	208
Why Multiplicity? Benefits and Challenges .....	208
Multiplicity and Health for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships.....	216
Multiplicity Among Our Images: Multiple Images of God .....	220
Parent-Child Relationships in Multiplicity .....	239
Multiplicity within Multiple Images.....	241
Multiplicity in the Korean Christian Immigrant Family.....	243

Dialogue Between Interrelating Values and American Pastoral Theologians' Views .....	246
Critiques and Benefits: Don Browning's Practical Theology of Equal Regard .....	248
Critiques and Benefits: Herbert Anderson's Practical Theology of Family.....	251
Critiques and Benefits: Bonnie Miller-McLemore's Practical Theology of Maternal Feminist Theology .....	255
Conclusion .....	257
Chapter 6. A Feminist Pastoral Theology of Connection for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships .....	259
A Feminist Pastoral Theology of Connection for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships .....	259
Interrelating Connection .....	261
Multiple, Changing, and Fluid Connection.....	264
Just Connection.....	270
Interrelating Values as a Resource for Pastoral and Counseling for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships.....	275
Mutual Respect .....	275
Transformative Suffering.....	276
Authentic <i>Jeong</i> .....	277
More Attuned Pastoral Care for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships.....	278
Ritual: Blessing for Leaving from Loving Home .....	279
Prayer .....	283
Preaching.....	285
Religious Education .....	287

Psychoeducational Groups: Relational Cultural Growth Groups for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships.....	290
Relational Cultural Growth Pastoral Counseling: A Case Study.....	296
Vignette: A Single Korean Christian Immigrant Parent Court-Mandated Counseling.....	296
Relational Cultural Growth Counseling for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent.....	299
Starting a Connection with Strongly Resistant Client with Authentic <i>Jeong</i> .....	300
Deeper Connection with Transformative Suffering.....	301
After Offering Empathy for His <i>Han</i> — Mutual Respect.....	305
The Formation of Self in Social Context According to RCT.....	306
Request for Initiating Connection: Use of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic <i>Jeong</i> .....	306
Ending the Therapy.....	309
Conclusion .....	312
Chapter 7. Summary, Reflections, and Research.....	314
Summary of the Main Points .....	314
Reflection, Recommendations, and Suggestions for Further Research .....	319
Bibliography .....	323

## List of Figures

1. Three Korean Cultural Traditions Infusing Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships.....	262
2. In Relational Cultural Theory, Three Qualities Infusing Human Connection.....	262
3. Co-existing, Fluid, Multiple, Interchangeable, Changing, Inter-relating Values of Connection for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships.....	264
4. Multiple, Changing, and Fluid Connections between Two Persons.....	270

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

“Spiritual teachings and practices have failed their purposes if they do not assist us in the cultivation of sanity.”<sup>1</sup> For a long time, I have struggled to find an appropriate pastoral theology and theory of pastoral care and counseling for Korean Christian immigrant families, especially when addressing parent-child relationships. I have been trained as a pastoral caregiver and pastoral counselor in both South Korea and the United States. However, I have persistently critiqued my own way of offering such care and counsel to Korean Christian immigrant faith communities because of the many times my own training, knowledge, and pastoral theological insights fail to assist a majority of those I seek to help. In congregational settings as well as clinical settings, I have so often experienced the disconnections, conflict, and *Han*-ridden experiences common to Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Facing my own limits and yet understanding the deep yearning for connection between parents and children reminds me of my own love and disconnection with my parents and my children.

I got a call from my mother a week ago. She told me that she cannot come to the States for my graduation. And she didn’t forget to say, “I love you.” Whenever I have a phone conversation with my mother, I usually respond with a nice voice in accordance with a proper filial relationship. However, when the call ends, I usually try to keep the tears from my eyes.

As far as I remember, when I was seven years old, my mother was sobbing while hugging me. I didn’t understand why she sobbed. While she sobbed, she said to me, “Jin

---

<sup>1</sup> Kathleen J. Greider, *Much Madness Is Divinest Sense: Wisdom in Memoirs of Soul-Suffering* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2007), 314.

Sook, if you become a doctor, I will dance through the whole village without clothes.

That is my wish.” Later I found out that my brother, who was not able to enter the college he wanted, had run away from home. My mother’s *Han* as a result of her most beloved first son’s failure encouraged me in my task to be filial daughter (*Hyo Nyoo*). From a very early age, my way of *Hyo* was study. My parents always showed their parental *Jeong* (love, connection) when I did well with my studies.

Now, as a grown child, I still fulfill my mother’s *Han*. Somehow, completing my Ph.D., becoming a doctor, and ending my mother’s sobbing was my life-long wish. Interestingly, I am fulfilling my mother’s *Han*, but my mother has not visited me in the States even once during the past ten years. My wondering, disappointment, and frustration became deep sorrow and *Han*. Somehow, I feel this is not fair. I live my life for my mother and my mother has not come to support and understand me. However, this unexpressed deep sorrow becomes deeper *Han* when I discovered the truth behind her actions. Over the years, she has tried to visit and see me, but she could not come because her application on for a visa was rejected, she underwent heart bypass surgery, my father had a health crisis, and she suffered a stroke that resulted in short-term memory loss. Because my mother did not want to bother and interrupt my study and life, she avoided leaking this possibly distressing news to me. I never heard about these important family issues as they happened. Therefore, I have a habit of crying whenever my mother calls. My mother’s way of *Jeong* deepens my *Jeong* for my mother, and deepens my *Hyo* and *Han* at the same time.

I am now a feminist mother myself. My sense of mutuality makes me think deeply about the special bond I share with my mother. As a mother, I also feel my

mother's deep vulnerability and concern for me because her silence was the best protection and *Jeong* for her own lifelong dream that I complete my doctoral studies. Her deepest love and *Jeong* has been the quietest silence over the past ten years. That is how her love and care protects me as a working-class Korean Christian mother. Even though I know that this is the way my mother shares her love, I have wondered how other parents and family can visit quite often to support my fellow colleagues and friends in the States.

When I started my clinical and congregational care with Korean Christian immigrant communities, I have felt similar pain from hearing the stories of Korean Christian immigrant parents and children. From Korean Christian immigrant parents' deep sobbing for their children, I revisit my mother and father who silently miss and cry for me. Most Korean Christian immigrant parents report that the only thing they can do for their children is to pray. Even though they do love their children and want to support their children's education, lack of knowledge about the education system in the States results in their silent prayers. At the same time, most youth and children say that their parents deeply want their academic success; they don't really care about how they experience school or their relationships with friends. Then, these children talk about how their American friends' parents seem to be so different and caring. They feel like their parents only care about grades.

These children's complaints about the difference between their Korean Christian immigrant parents and other so-called "American friends' parents" breaks my heart. Many times I was told the same message from my daughter Jane: "Mom, I think you are so cool, but you are very different from my American friends' parents. They are much nicer and caring." Why do Jane's comments trigger my tears and anger at the same time?



Why is my parenting not valued because my way of showing love is not the same as her friends' parents? This question again causes me to empathize with my mother's way of loving me, a way that I have been criticizing for a long time.

I see a parallel process between what occurs in my own relationship with my parents and children and most Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. There are deep unnamed silences, but these are often unnamed wishes for deep connection and love between parents and children. There should be some way to mediate their love and pain. There should be some understanding of the different styles of parental love and care.

In this dissertation I endeavor to construct a feminist pastoral theology of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. As a feminist mother, I wish for the wisdom to cultivate my own sanity as a child and as a parent who needs to provide loving, caring parenting for my own children. As a pastoral caregiver and pastoral counselor, I wish to help the disconnected but loving Korean Christian immigrant parents and their children. Therefore, I started to think about a feminist pastoral theology of connection that aims to heal silenced love, *Jeong*, and the pain of Korean Christian immigrant families so that I can cultivate healing and wholeness through a new pastoral theology and revised modality of pastoral care and pastoral counseling.

## The Problem

### Statement of the Core Problem

The core problem addressed by this dissertation is the combined challenge for Korean Christian immigrant parents who have Korean cultural interpretations of

parenting, the experience of immigration, and certain theological/biblical interpretations of the parent-child relationship, all of which exacerbate disconnection between these Korean Christian immigrant parents and their children.<sup>2</sup>

### Discussion of the Core Problem

Parenting in any circumstance is a challenge. Korean Christian immigrant parents face special challenges. Three of these challenges comprise the core problem addressed in the dissertation.

First, Korean Confucian culture poses special challenges for Korean Christian immigrant parents; its hierarchical nature, especially, is part of the core problem addressed in this work. Korean Confucianism places a heavy emphasis on the son's duty to his parents, according to the Confucian notion of parental authority given by Heaven (traditionally called *Hyo*: filial piety, authority).<sup>3</sup> This concept of *Hyo* is a basic ethical virtue in many Korean families. This Confucian emphasis on obedience to parental authority, especially paternal authority, has encountered conflict with modern Western culture, which focuses on individuality and equality. Traditionally, Korean parenting is

---

<sup>2</sup> Ho-Youn Kwon, Kwang Chung Kim, and R. Stephen Warner, "Korean American Religion in International Perspective," in *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore*, ed. Ho-Youn Kwon, Kwang Chung Kim, and R. Stephen Warner (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 1-24. This book addresses the history of Korean immigrants, challenges for immigrant adults and children, their disconnection, and a social analysis of immigrant churches. This dissertation employs Korean authors' names as they appear in the text. Depending on the author's own use, Korean names appear differently, such as Ho-Youn Kwon and Kwang Chung Kim. Won Moo Hurh. *The Korean Americans* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998), 69-101. These pages address Korean immigrant challenges of acculturation and the strong bond of the parent-child relationship in the Korean immigrant family system. The research is somewhat out of date, but it is significant that it nevertheless depicts dynamics still heavily present in current Korean immigrant experience.

Also, I will use an official Korean Romanization System (Revised Romanization of Korean approved in 2000; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revised\\_Romanization\\_of\\_Korean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revised_Romanization_of_Korean) and [http://web.archive.org/web/20070916025652/http://www.korea.net/korea/kor\\_loca.asp?code=A020303](http://web.archive.org/web/20070916025652/http://www.korea.net/korea/kor_loca.asp?code=A020303)).

<sup>3</sup> Eun Sun Lee, "유교의 효 윤리와 기독교의 책임 윤리" [*Hyo* as Confucian Ethics and Christian Ethics of Responsibility], in *유교, 기독교, 그리고 페미니즘* [Confucianism, Christianity, and Feminism] (Seoul: Jisiksanupsa, 2003), 87-117.

defined by a father's authority (*Eom*: authority, control) and a mother's psychological warmth (*Ja*: benevolence, psychological warmth), referred to collectively as *Eom Bu Ja Mo* (Strict Father, Affectionate Mother).<sup>4</sup> A strict father maintains authority and an affectionate mother offers psychological warmth. Another aspect of parental love and affection can be described as *Jeong* (love, affection, and fused connection). The concept of *Jeong* is used for many different occasions, and it can express parental love for children (*Bu Jeong/ Mo Jeong*). Nevertheless, Youngshin Park and Euichul Kim assert that most Korean children view their fathers as strict and their mothers as affectionate. The 1999 financial crisis in Korea, which resulted in a major economic recession and the involvement of the International Monetary Fund, resulted in a shift in the social economic milieu, which impacted the nature of parent-child relationships. Over the three decades from 1967 to 1996 (with the exception of 1980), the Korean economy has enjoyed high growth, rising from one of the world's poorest economies (\$4.27 billion GNP and per capita income of \$142) in 1967 to the 111<sup>th</sup> largest economy (\$430.43 billion GNP and per capita income \$10, 543) in 1996. After this smooth and positive economic development, there was a sudden arrival of the currency crisis, followed by the general financial crisis in 1997. Finally, the IMF bailout negotiation reached the endgame stage and the restructuring of the banking sector was in its final shape.<sup>5</sup> Thus, a majority of Korean families endured an economic crisis that impacted Korean family relationships both directly and indirectly.

---

<sup>4</sup> Youngshin Park and Euichul Kim, 한국인의 부모자녀 관계-자기개념과 가족역할 인식의 토착 심리 탐구 [Korean Parent-Child Relationship: A Native Psychological Research for Self-Concept and the Role of Korean Family] (Seoul: Kyoukkwuhaksa, 2004 ), 111-160.

<sup>5</sup> Taeho Kim, "An Analysis of Financial Crisis Handling: Lessons from the Korean Experience 1," *Management International Review* 39 (1999): 27-51.

For example, Youngshin Park and Euichul Kim found that the percentage of children who view their fathers as strict and their mothers as affectionate increased from 33.9% to 46.2%.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the views of paternal care as authoritative and maternal care as affectionate persist and can vary according to various social changes. In fact, recent social changes in Korean society have relaxed these traditional parental roles. A radical decrease in the birth rate (a 75% decrease over the past 40 years), increased attention to children's education, increased numbers of dual-breadwinners, and increased women's desire to be independent have resulted in many young parents tending to be more permissive with their children. As such, there has been a decrease in the traditional *Eom Bu Ja Mo* style of parenting.<sup>7</sup>

Though aspects of traditional parenting are problematic, Heayoung Kim argues that these recent shifts in parenting styles have resulted in the Korean family becoming little more than a basic social unit for reproduction and maintaining social class, without needed feelings of intimate connection among family members.<sup>8</sup> Fathers are often absent due to work pressures as they strive to survive and achieve in the competitive environment of the workplace. Mothers are pressured to ensure that their children receive the best possible education so the children can attend good colleges that will promote their future social mobility. Fathers, while less involved in active parenting, retain negative aspects such as *Um Bu*, generally only getting involved in unhelpful ways when

---

<sup>6</sup> Youngshin Park and Euichul Kim, 한국인의 부모자녀 관계-자기개념과 가족역할 인식의 토착 심리 탐구 [Korean Parent-Child Relationship: A Native Psychological Research for Self-Concept and the Role of Korean Family], 117,129.

<sup>7</sup> Sunkwon Kim, Kyungsup Chang, Hyunsong Lee, Aeju Cho, and Inju Song, “한국 가족의 변화와 대응방안” [Response to the Changes of Korean Family], *Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs*, 2000 Research Report: 1-10.

<sup>8</sup> Heayoung Kim, “한국 가족의 재고-친밀성의 부재와 허약한 가족 관계” [A Revisit to Korean Family Culture], *Health and Social Welfare Forum* 5 (2006): 20-34.

discipline is called for. In these ways, traditional *Eom Bu Ja Mo* parenting styles have been challenged by changes in contemporary Korean families. There is a need for reconstruction that encourages healthy intimacy. Without thoughtful understanding and the practice of healthy models of parenting, Korean families will continue to suffer from the pressures of Confucian tradition and a lack of cohesiveness and constructive communication, which will continue to result in relational disconnections in the parent-child relationship.<sup>9</sup>

Korean parents who follow the traditional Korean parenting style and who emigrate to the United States are challenged further by being caught between their traditional Korean values and U.S. sociocultural cultural values. In his 2004 article, “Navigating Between Cultures,” K. Samuel Lee traces the Korean American family’s struggle and need for wisdom and exploration of the cultural differences between Korean immigrant parents and the Korean cultural influences on parenting.<sup>10</sup> Lee emphasizes the issues of collectivism, paternal authority, and maternal affection in his discussion of Western cultures that espouse individuality, equality, and intimacy in parent-child relationships. Lee is careful not to polarize the cultures, seeking instead a wisdom for Korean American families to live “both-and” as they cultivate a communication of love.

That the traditional Korean parenting model has already been challenged by social changes in Korean culture exacerbates the challenges Korean American parents face as

---

<sup>9</sup> Because the strongly competitive and labor-oriented culture in Korea pushes Korean fathers to devote their life to their work, the absence of Korean fathering has been a social issue. Both the strict father and the absent father can cause insufficient intimacy within the Korean family.

<sup>10</sup> K. Samuel Lee, “Navigating between Cultures: The Bicultural Family’s Lived Realities,” in *Mutuality Matters: Family, Faith, and Love*, ed. Herbert Anderson et al. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers: 2004), 107-17. Lee addresses the complicated dynamics of the lived realities of Korean Americans, focusing on two different kinds of love (agape and caritas) and bicultural identification (Linear vs. Orthogonal).

they adjust their parenting in the United States. Yoo Sung Yang wrote a dissertation on Korean parental authority with teenage children and argues for its dual—both positive and negative—nature. In terms of academic achievement, Korean parental authority seems to be positively used. In terms of relational patterns, Korean parental authority seems to be seen as unhealthy and sometimes abusive to their teen children. He recommends that Korean immigrant parents strive to understand their own perceptions of parental authority over their children and the impact it has on their relationships with their teenagers. Yang suggests that many Korean immigrant parents need to develop a healthy parenting model that makes constructive use of Confucian parenting values. These models should strive to apply the parental authority given by Confucian culture toward establishing nurturing relationships with their children who want to be treated as independent beings rather than property.<sup>11</sup>

Korean immigrant parents meet numerous challenges as they navigate among the differences between Korean and U.S. cultures. Thus, more culturally appropriate parenting models could help promote healthy Korean immigrant parent-child relationships. In summary, 1) both Korean and Korean American parents are experiencing serious social changes; 2) these changes are caused by and relate to conflicting value systems; 3) the traditional Korean parenting style, exemplified by *Eom Bu Ja Mo*, is an inadequate parenting model for both Korean and Korean American families; 4) enforcing obligation to parental authority prevents healthy parent-child relationships between Korean parents and children raised in the United States; 5) therefore, new parenting models need to be considered to help Korean and Korean

---

<sup>11</sup> Yoo Sung Yang, "Parental Authority in Korean-American Parent-Teen Relationships" (Th.D. diss., Boston University, 1996), 41-44.

American parents better navigate in their rapidly changing societies through supporting the diversity of family systems and gender equality.

Second, immigration itself constitutes a huge spectrum of challenges and negotiations for anyone and, for Korean Christian immigrant parents, those challenges and negotiations comprise another part of the core problem addressed in this dissertation. Immigrant parents face an extra burden in terms of their parenting duties. When encountering a new culture, parents are forced by a society to decide how much to adapt to different cultural practices and values. This negotiation process occurs between the mother and the father, between the parents' values and society's values, between what the children experience in the world and at home, and between the parents and the children in their relational dynamics.<sup>12</sup> These multiple levels of negotiation occur simultaneously. Most Korean Christian immigrant parents who move from their country want to provide better living and educational opportunities for their children. However, Korean immigrant parents have to deal with numerous challenging factors such as: changes in culture and language; weakened parental authority due to the differential acculturation rate within the family (children acculturating faster than parents); living in a Western culture that supports more individuality among family members than does Korean culture; lack of energy and time for developing family intimacy; less opportunity to maintain the family's social status; lowered self-esteem due to change of social status.<sup>13</sup> Immigrant parents face these challenges, to varying degrees, on an everyday basis. Most immigrant parents

---

<sup>12</sup> Shi-Juan Wu, "Parenting in Chinese American Families," in *Culturally Diverse Parent-Child and Family Relationships*, ed. Nancy Boyed (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 235.

<sup>13</sup> Ho-Youn Kwon, Kwang Chung Kim, and R. Stephen Warner, "Korean American Religion in International Perspective," 13.

immigrate to better their children's prospects. Their commitment to their children is often expressed through working tirelessly to earn money and spend money on them. And in an effort to raise their children as competent bicultural individuals, most parents emphasize traditional Korean culture in the home. Due to the stress and pressures caused by transitioning among societies and values systems, some parents experience more than stress; they may develop a kind of broken-heartedness.

Most Korean immigrant parents genuinely hope to support their children and to provide better opportunities for them, but limited socioeconomic resources, such as limited language fluency, insufficient social networking beyond the Korean community, and limited job opportunities, do not allow them to be the parents that they dream and desire to be. These challenging environments faced by most first-generation Korean immigrants make it difficult for them to develop healthy, loving, and intimate parent-child relationships.

The influence of Korean immigrant churches needs to be examined from the perspective of healthy parenting, as some common characteristics contribute a third aspect to the core problem being investigated. In their research, Kwang Chung Kim and Shin Kim identify five common tendencies among Protestant Korean immigrant churches. According to their findings, most Protestant immigrant churches tend: 1) to be concerned about individual salvation according to evangelical religious theology; 2) to be isolated from mainstream U.S. churches; 3) to make sharp distinctions between adult members who are involved with the church and those that are not, according to the extent and intention of their participation (strong commitment to their current congregation and near indifference to needs outside of their current congregation); 4) to



exclude women from positions of leadership; 5) to focus on personalistic features that cause isolation from other theological perspectives, cultural understandings, and gender inclusion.<sup>14</sup>

Stephen Cha asserts that this distinctive type of first-generation Korean immigrant faith influences their children's internalization of Christian faith. He lays out four areas of his research on the faith framework of second-generation Korean immigrants: 1) transitioning between values of Korean and U.S. cultures; 2) individualized/inward-focused faith; 3) work-driven faith; 4) the place of children in an ethnocentric church. Cha also explores how children view their parents' faith. He reports that children tend to surmise that faith affects their parents values as follows: 1) high focus on study and good grades as proof of being a better Christian; 2) importance of honoring parents; 3) high focus on success; 4) church as the center of their life; 5) enforcement of absolute obedience to parents; 6) strong intent to raise children as Christians.<sup>15</sup> These factors underscore the importance of examining the role that Korean immigrant churches play in Korean Christian immigrant parenting. Korean Christian immigrants tend to raise their children in churches that focus on success, study, and obedience while emphasizing an inward faith that isolates them from other American churches. These factors may have originated from the evangelical theology of the immigrant churches and also Korean cultural interpretations of parent-child

---

<sup>14</sup> Kwang Chung Kim, and Shin Kim, "The Ethnic Roles of Korean Immigrant Churches in the United States," in *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore*, ed. Ho-Youn Kwon, Kwang Chung Kim, and R. Stephen Warner (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 71-93.

<sup>15</sup> Stephan S. Cha, "Religious Socialization in Korean American Families: Changing Patterns over Generalizations" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity International University, 2003), 38-54.

relationships. In this context, children are raised with a blend of Confucian and Western notions of attaining materialistic success through study.

They are also often taught set interpretations of the Bible that do little to encourage healthy, reciprocal relationships with parents. Korean immigrant churches tend to teach literal messages about children's obedience and parental authority, relying on texts such as: the Ten Commandments; Genesis 22:1-19; Proverbs 1:8-9; Proverbs 4:1; Proverbs 23:24-25; Ephesians 6:1-3. These passages' implicit and explicit teachings about parental authority—for example, God as the authoritarian father and humans as obedient and vulnerable children—can be both empowering and confusing. Korean immigrant fathers who want to maintain strong paternal authority as per their Korean Confucian culture and understanding of the Christian tradition may find that their authority has been weakened due to a number of social and economic factors. They lack healthy parenting models, given the paucity of adequate guidance for immigrant parents and their children. Also, women tend to acculturate more swiftly, which can result in a father's authority not always being perceived by his children and wife.<sup>16</sup> However, the father's devalued authority is partly recovered through being reinforced by the Korean immigrant church. This reinforced paternal authority based on a Confucian interpretation of the Bible can cause a distorted use of paternal authority over children.

---

<sup>16</sup> Young I. Song and Ailee Moon, *Korean American Women: From Tradition to Modern Feminism* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998), 75-102; Yoo Sung Yang, "Parental Authority in Korean-American Parent-Teen Relationships," 41-44.

## Thesis and Flow of the Argument

### Thesis

A feminist pastoral theology of connection, interrelating Korean traditional values for parenting (*Hyo, Han, Jeong*), and psychological values for relationship (mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity) provides constructive resources for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.<sup>17</sup>

### Flow of the Argument

In this chapter, I offer a description of the project as a whole, including an expanded discussion of the core problem addressed in the dissertation, the main argument, and the method and flow of the argument. This chapter introduces the challenges of Korean cultural interpretations of parenting, the immigration experience, and certain theological/biblical interpretations of parent-child relationships that exacerbate disconnection between Korean immigrant parents and their children. The need for additional parenting models is also addressed. Finally, the chapter describes the scope, limitations, and contributions of the project.

Chapter Two provides an analytical review of literature in theological and religious studies, as well as the social sciences that addresses Korean Christian immigrant parenting as a means to articulate current knowledge about Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

---

<sup>17</sup> My thesis statement contains emphases on connection, mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity, which are core values in Relational Cultural Theory. Relational Cultural Theory (RCT) was originally developed by Jean Baker Miller, Judith Jordan, Irene Stiver, and Janet Surrey, on the basis of their psychotherapeutic work with girls and women. According to RCT, mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity are core concepts that foster connection in relationships.

In Chapter Three, I view Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships through two lenses. First, I review the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships from the perspectives of theological studies and social science literature. Second, I analyze Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships through the emphasis of Relational Cultural Theory (RCT) on the concepts of mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity. I engage RCT's three characteristics in dialogue with the Korean cultural concepts of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*. These three psychological values interrelate with and share characteristics of traditional Korean values in mutually validating ways. I discuss *Hyo* and mutuality with regard to distorted and healthy concepts of authority. I discuss *Han* and vulnerability with regard to the concepts of suffering. I discuss *Jeong* and authenticity with regard to the concepts of connection. I use these Korean cultural terms not to essentialize Korean culture. Rather, I craft this dialogue between RCT values and Korean values to show how traditional concepts can be nuanced to empower and transform Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. In so doing, I draw out new understandings of these concepts as follows: Mutual Respect (*Hyo* + Mutuality), Transformative Suffering (*Han* + Vulnerability) and Authentic *Jeong* (*Jeong* + Authenticity). These new combined dimensions of both the Korean cultural concepts and RCT concepts will enrich and empower the connection between Korean Christian immigrant parents and their children.

Next, in Chapter Four, in light of the importance of biblical authority for Korean Christian immigrants, I incorporate biblical reflections concerning the interrelating values of Mutual Respect (*Hyo* + Mutuality), Transformative Suffering (*Han* + Vulnerability), and Authentic *Jeong* (*Jeong* + Authenticity ). I use Genesis 22, which represents the

Korean cultural concepts of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* in the relationship between Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. This chapter explores different interpretations of the same Bible verse depending on the reader's cultural location; my method is inspired mainly by Kwok Pui-lan, Namsoon Kang and Musa Dube in order to identify culturally appropriate biblical interpretation for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. These perspectives will augment Korean Christian immigrant parents' belief in a literal interpretation of the Bible with regard to implicit/explicit views of parent-child relationships and images of God as an authoritarian parent. Grounding their reading of the Bible in their current cultural context will empower and provide parents with multiple ways to understand and use the Bible as a spiritual resource. The possibility of multiple interpretations from their cultural location can empower Korean Christian immigrants to contextualize their biblical reading as a life-giving authority and resource.

In Chapter Five, to further address the importance of religious perspectives for Korean Christian parents, I discuss theological reflections on multiplicity for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. In dialogue with selected scholars—Pamela Cooper-White, Mary Clark Moschella, and Andrew Sung Park—I argue for the value of multiplicity in theology and this value of multiplicity will be supported by multiplicity, change, and fluidity in multiple, changing, and fluid postmodern theological anthropology. In orthodox theology, great emphasis has been placed on the authority of God. In Korean cultural contexts, this is often symbolized as a God of *Hyo*, which imparts a negative cultural nuance—"authoritarian God," rather than "authoritative God." However, in this chapter, I am introducing multiplicity in our image of God associated with three Korean cultural traditions, which are God of *Hyo*, in combination with God of

*Han* and God of *Jeong*. Also, I add another layer of multiplicity by presenting multiple images of God and parenting styles. Naming multiple images of God will liberate Korean Christian immigrants from the mono-image of God as Father. At the same time, there will be multiplicity within these images of God. For example, if one sees God as God of *Hyo*, multiple images and meanings are contained therein. Therefore, multiplicity as a theological value liberates us from rigid, disempowering images of God toward more diverse and multiple images of God. The multiple images of God could influence us toward accepting multiplicity in human parent-child relationships as well as multiplicity in each parent-child relationship. In this way, Korean Christian immigrant parents and children are freer and encouraged to create their own relational style. Therefore, this postmodern theological anthropology presupposes the value of multiplicity and, further, its multiple, changing, and fluid identity for Korean Christian immigrant parents. This chapter offers a theological basis for multiple, changing, and fluid Korean Christian immigrant parent-child connections as argued in Chapter Six. Also, at the end of Chapter Five, I add another layer of multiplicity by dialoging with American pastoral theologians, Don S. Browning, Herbert Anderson, and Bonnie Miller-McLemore regarding how to utilize interrelating values of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* for Korean Christian immigrant family connection. This theological dialogue gives some insights toward the development of a feminist pastoral theology, pastoral care, and counseling of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

Finally, in Chapter Six, I create a feminist pastoral theology of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. My theological assertion regarding the value of connection entails the capacity for connection to be: interrelating;

multiple, changing, and fluid, and just. Therefore, I conclude that parent-child connections within Korean Christian immigrant families can also be multiple, changing, and fluid. However, Korean Christian immigrant family connections necessitate just connection that adheres to feminist values of gender equality and the valuing of each family member's mutuality in a way that empowers disempowered family members. Therefore, based upon this feminist pastoral theology of connection, I propose a feminist pastoral care of ritual, religious education, and psychoeducational counseling through relational cultural growth groups for Korean Christian immigrant parents and children; also, I will describe a relational cultural growth counseling model for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

I conclude in Chapter Seven by summarizing the main points of each chapter and providing some recommendations for further research.

#### Methodology: Feminist Pastoral Theological Method

I use an analytical method to critically review literature and to reflect on my own clinical experience. I mainly use the four characteristics of a feminist pastoral theological method as suggested by Carrie Doehring: “1) *be pastoral theological*; 2) *be feminist*; 3) *be accountable*; 4) *view the ultimate purpose of feminist pastoral theology as for liberating marginalized people.*”<sup>18</sup>

First, in order to *be pastoral theological*, Doehring calls for interdisciplinary scholarship in order to inform the practice of care. For Doehring, theology or the social sciences alone are not adequate in the construction of a pastoral theology. I agree with her

---

<sup>18</sup> Carrie Doehring, “A Method of Feminist Pastoral Theology,” in *Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Brita L. Gill-Austern (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 95-112.

emphasis on interdisciplinary scholarship rather than the use of only one discipline. Therefore, I will use theology, psychology, and other social sciences, including both Korean and Korean immigrant-related resources, to develop a method of care for the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Also, I will use diverse feminist theology from post-structural, postmodern, and postcolonial studies.

Second, in order to *be feminist*, Doebling argues that *contextual and pragmatic* perspectives are essential. The post-structural feminist perspective asserts that there are no “core meanings or deep structures to life experiences that are singularly, absolutely, or universally true.”<sup>19</sup> Rather, Doebling asserts that there are multiple meanings to life experience. She sees the importance of positionality in an argument and within an individual’s concept of truth, and she applies her contextual and positional understanding of truth to the practice of care. Thus, taking a feminist approach, my focus on the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship is contextual and positional.

However, as I described, I will use diverse feminist views for the benefit of empowering Korean Christian immigrant families, and this use of diverse feminist views will be contextually and pragmatically decided. In order to support this very contextual and pragmatic issue, exploring the multiple meanings of truth for the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship is necessary. In a related vein, I do not pathologize the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships simply because it does not reflect Western cultural norms. My approach aims not at universalizing or essentializing but at claiming different voices for minority parents. Later, in this chapter, I talk about the value of strategic essentialism for the purpose of liberating the marginalized.

---

<sup>19</sup> Carrie Doebling, “A Method of Feminist Pastoral Theology,” 98.



Third, Doebling asserts that the feminist pastoral theological method is *accountable* in terms of explicitly identifying sources deemed authoritative for theory and practice—such as the Bible, experience, social scientific data, and denominational sources. To be accountable while exploring the connection between Korean Christian immigrant parents and their children, I will give authoritative weight to literature from feminist psychology and counseling and from Christian scholarship, the Bible, and both professional (clinical/ministerial) and personal experiences of working and living within a Korean immigrant community.

Fourth, Doebling explains that the first three categories inform the *ultimate purpose of feminist pastoral theology*. She uses Christian theology as the norm and source for fulfilling her ultimate goal of transforming tradition to *liberate marginalized people* based on the interaction of contextual factors such as gender, race, and class. In accordance with Doebling's final goal, I use this methodology to contribute to the liberation of marginalized Korean Christian immigrant parents and children. Not only am I a Korean Christian immigrant parent, but I also want to engage in a discourse to claim marginalized voices and to further alleviate the suffering of marginalized people.

### Audience

I am writing this dissertation to increase research and resources in the area of Korean Christian immigrant parenting. This will broaden scholarly discussions about parenting, acculturation, and biblical and theological images for parenting and parent-child relationships. This dissertation also seeks to assist leaders of Christian faith communities in their ministries with families and help immigrant parents build connection with their children. This project offers critical insights into the need for

contextualized interpretations of parenting from psychological, social, biblical, and theological perspectives to Korean Christian immigrant leaders and parents.

### Scope and Limitations

This dissertation is about Korean American immigrant parenting issues. Though Koreans migrate to other geographical locations, I am considering only Korean immigrant experiences in the United States. Moreover, I am focusing on families where the parents are first-generation immigrants and the children are either born in the United States or come to the United States at an early age (no older than elementary school). My analysis is limited to Korean American parenting, though its discussion of the nature of parenting in general might be relevant for parenting in other ethnic minority and immigrant groups. This dissertation is written from the perspective of Protestant Christianity and is intended for the care of Korean immigrants who are Protestant Christians. Therefore, I will not include the perspectives and uniqueness of Catholic Korean Christianity and related Churches. This choice is made because of my own location in Christianity and the importance of Christianity to many Korean immigrants, though my argument may have value in other religious traditions. In this work I will be assuming parents and children who are physically and psychologically healthy; addressing the relationships of parents and children with medical or psychological illnesses is important but beyond the scope of this project.

The scope of the dissertation is enhanced and limited by my location and particularity. Born in Korea, I have lived in California for ten years as a student, immigrant and, now, “permanent alien resident.” My professional identity is as a certified pastoral counselor, working as a counseling minister, primarily with immigrants, in a

Korean American United Methodist Church. I also have experience as an education minister in a small Korean immigrant church. I am the mother of two daughters, one born in Korea, the other born in the United States. As a mother, counselor, minister, and Ph.D. student who is in the process of acculturation in both theology and culture, I have struggled personally to find a helpful model for Korean Christian feminist parent-child relationships. From my professional and personal experiences, I have developed a critical consciousness of the pain of disconnection between Korean Christian immigrant parents and their children.

### Definition of Terms

The term “Korean Christian immigrant” is a broad and essential term. I use this term in the mode of strategic essentialism, as suggested by following Gayatri Spivak.<sup>20</sup> Spivak asserts that essentialism needs to be used for strategic reasons: feminists and others may have to take the risk of essentialism in the process of thinking differently for the liberation of women and other marginalized people. Spivak notes that the strategic use of essentialism is always accompanied by a strategy of persistent critique. Spivak posits the following:

To begin with, I think the way in which the awareness of strategy works here is through a persistent critique. The critical moment does not come only at a certain stage when one sees one's effort, in terms of an essence that has been used for political mobilization, succeeding, when one sees that one has successfully brought a political movement to a conclusion, as in the case of revolutions or national liberation movements. It is not only in that moment of euphoria that we begin to decide that it was strategic all along, because generally it doesn't work that way, although that is important, too. It seems to me that the awareness of

---

<sup>20</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Ellen Rooney, “In a Word: Interview,” in *The Essential Difference*, ed. Naomi Schor and Elizabeth Weed (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 151-184; reprinted in *Contemporary Literature Criticism*, ed. Jeffrey W. Hunter, vol. 233 (Detroit: Gale, 2007), available online in Gale's Literature Resource Center, [http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.libraries.claremont.edu/ps/i.do?andid=GALE%7CH1100075918&v=2.1&u=claremont\\_main&it=r&p=LitRC&sw=w](http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.libraries.claremont.edu/ps/i.do?andid=GALE%7CH1100075918&v=2.1&u=claremont_main&it=r&p=LitRC&sw=w) (accessed January 4: 2011).

strategy--the strategic use of an essence as a mobilizing slogan or masterword like *woman* or *worker* or the name of any nation that you would like--it seems to me that this critique has to be persistent all along the way, even when it seems that to remind oneself of it is counterproductive. Unfortunately, that crisis must be with us, otherwise the strategy freezes into something like what you call an essentialist position.<sup>21</sup>

In summary, Spivak asserts the risk of essentialism for the liberation of the marginalized, but she also points out that the use of essentialism needs to be constantly critiqued all along the way. Accordingly, I use the term Korean Christian immigrant and some other essentialist terms in taking the risk as a feminist for the empowerment of Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Even though I use strategic essentialism for the sake of liberation, I am aware of the diversity of people in the category of Korean Christian immigrant. I use strategic essentialism to help build a body of literature directed toward this too-often overlooked cultural group, but I also seek to attend as much as possible to Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships at this point in time and in the contexts I have noted. Therefore, my use of term Korean Christian immigrant is used along with my persistent critique for empowerment of Korean Christian immigrant parents and children.

The term "second-generation Korean American" refers to Korean American young adults and children who were born in Korea or immigrated by age 4 or 5, but maintain a primary cultural identity formed in U.S culture. In this dissertation, I use this term in a way commonly reiterated by other scholars. However, this term in itself is polemical and in ways problematic. I do not argue about this challenge in this dissertation.

---

<sup>21</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Ellen Rooney, "In a Word: Interview."

Rather, I use this term when comparing the differences between first-generation Korean Christian immigrant parents and their children who are born in Korea or the United States.

The term “parent” has a broader meaning than we might assume. Many immigrant children are raised not only by parents but also, for example, by day care centers, relatives, or neighbors. I focus on the quality of the parent-child relationships as a representative human relationship, because parenting can be provided by, for example, a mother and father, or a mother and day-care providers, or a father and preschool teachers, or a single parent and relatives, or a single parent alone—any person or even institution responsible for the quality and quantity of care for a child can be considered a “parent” for the purposes of this dissertation. The term *parent-child* is broad also in terms of the ages of parents and of children.

The terms “mutuality,” “vulnerability,” and “authenticity” have different meanings in different disciplines and contexts. I use these three terms in my thesis and this dissertation from the perspective of Relational Cultural Theory. Mutuality is “a fundamental property of healthy growth-enhancing connections and can be described as a creative process in which the contributions of each person and openness to change allow something new to happen.”<sup>22</sup> Vulnerability is a quality that allows persons to view their uncertainty as an opportunity for growth in their capacity for sustaining the complexity inherent in connection.<sup>23</sup> Authenticity is “an increasing capacity for representing oneself more fully in relationship.”<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Maureen Walker, “How Relationships Heal,” in *How Connection Heals: Stories from Relational Cultural Therapy*, ed. Maureen Walker and Wendy B. Rosen (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 13.

<sup>23</sup> Maureen Walker, “How Relationships Heal,” 12

<sup>24</sup> Maureen Walker, “How Relationships Heal,” 11-12.

Throughout this dissertation I use the term “U.S. dominant culture.” This term is commonly employed in Korean Christian immigrant discourse and within our everyday life experience. For the purposes of this dissertation, I employ this term when highlighting the differences between Korean Christian immigrant parents’ way of living, relating, and parenting and so-called “American” parents’ way of living, relating, and parenting.

### Originality and Contribution

There is a vast amount of literature on parenting, immigration, and Christianity. However, there are relatively few sources for Korean American Christian immigrant parenting, and even fewer that emphasize feminist pastoral care and counseling or that focus on the values of vulnerability, mutuality, and authenticity and their relevance for Korean cultures. The originality and contribution of this dissertation is that it offers a model for healthy and closely connected Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships based on the interrelation of Korean traditional values for parenting (*Hyo, Han, Jeong*) and psychological values for relationship (Mutuality, Vulnerability, Authenticity).

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature on Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

“I do not see, although I have eyes.  
Then, have I become blind? No, I have not.  
I do not hear, although I have ears.  
Then have I become deaf? No, I have not.  
I do not speak, although I have a mouth.  
Then, have I lost my speech? No, I have not.  
I have become an old stranger who wants to raise a young tree  
in this wealthy land.  
(Ronald Takaki, *In a Different Shore*)

As a means to articulate current knowledge about Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships, this chapter will provide an analytical review of literature addressing Korean Christian immigrant parenting from theological and religious studies as well as the social sciences. I will organize this review of Korean Christian immigrant parenting into three sections: 1) traditional Korean family; 2) Korean immigrant parent-child relationships; 3) Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

#### Traditional Korean Parent-Child Relationships

In an effort to explicate the traditional Korean parent-child relationship, this section is comprised of the three sub-sections which address the traditional Korean family, Confucian goals for child rearing, and a typology of Korean parent-child relationships. The first sub-section illuminates the Yi dynasty's Confucian emphasis and its continuing impact in parent-child relationships. The second describes Confucian goals for child rearing that focus on *Yuk Ye* (*Six Arts*) and *O-Sang* (*Five Personality and Character Traits*). The third sub-section outlines the following three types of Korean parent-child relationships: 1) intimacy between father and son (*Bu Ja Yu Chin*); 2) Strict Father,

Affectionate Mother (*Eom Bu Ja Mo*); and 3) parent-child affective bonding (*Bu Ja Yu Chin Seong Jeong*). Discussing these traditional notions of the Korean family will be foundational for further discussion of the Korean immigration parent-child relationship.

### Traditional Korean Family

Many scholars have referred to Korean families as highly patriarchal and attributed this to the heavy influence of Confucianism. It is important to note that there were, historically, times that were less gender discriminative in areas like familial and social relationships. During the Silla (ca. 400-918 C.E.) and Goryeo (918-1392) dynasties, women were able to hold the royal throne and become queen mothers as regents of young kings. During these two dynasties women had social rights or privileges, in direct contrast to oppressive Confucian practices.<sup>25</sup> For example, unlike the practice of Confucian culture, bridegrooms commonly lived in their brides' homes until their children reached certain ages. Also, property inheritances were equally divided between male and female children.<sup>26</sup> Thus, when discussing Korean culture, it is important to remember that there was a pre-Confucian time when more liberating gender equality existed in families. Based on this ancient historical background of Korean culture, one can argue that to be a Korean does not mean that a person is innately Confucian.

Unlike the Silla and Goryeo dynasties, the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910) was a time of Confucian orthodoxy in Korea. Because of this Confucian orthodoxy, the hierarchy of basic human relationships changed in the direction of male superiority. The basic

---

<sup>25</sup> Young-Chung Kim, ed., *Women of Korea: A History from Ancient Times to 1945* (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1979), 30-31. Cited by Susan Kim, "Changes and Continuities in Second Generation Korean American Families" (Ph.D. diss., City of University of New York, 2007), 86.

<sup>26</sup> Susan Kim, "Changes and Continuities in Second Generation Korean American Families" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2007), 86.



principles of Confucian orthodoxy are to be found in Confucius' teachings, as recorded in the *Analects* (written ca. 551-479 B.C.E.), and in the *Mencius*, a collection of the statements of Mencius (371-289 B.C.E.).<sup>27</sup> Mencius was one of the major Confucian thinkers who believed that human nature is good, as compared to Xuzi, the third century's major Confucian thinker, who believed that human nature is evil.<sup>28</sup>

The *Mencius* in particular includes ethical guidance for the fundamental social relations called "Three Bonds and Five Relationships" (*Sam Gang O Ryun*). It teaches that there are three bonds in which the son rightly serves the father, the subject rightly serves the king, and the wife rightly serves the husband. It also teaches the moral principles in five human relationships: intimacy between father and son (*Bu Ja Yu Chin*)<sup>29</sup>; loyalty between ruler and subject (*Gun Sin Yu Eui*); (proper) distance between husband and wife (*Nam Nyeo Yu Byeol*); order between the old over the young (*Jang Yu Yu Seo*); and trust between friends (*Bung Ui Yu Shin*). These moral principles gave rise to the new social order by which the Yi Dynasty taught and ruled its people. These relational ethical principles are deeply ingrained in Koreans' daily lives even in contemporary Korean society, despite the fact that the Yi Dynasty ended its rule a century ago and that Korean society, at least officially, is now a democratic society.

---

<sup>27</sup> In Ancient Korea, students were required to learn about Mencius. In order to be a governor, they had to memorize and learn about the entire *Mencius* text. However, in contemporary Korea, education about Mencius takes place in certain classes like Chinese or Korean literature and is also embedded in principles or values from pervasive mass culture and Korean literature. Except within certain college or graduate school majors in Chinese literature, in the public education system through high school, students no longer learn *Mencius* as a full text.

<sup>28</sup> *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. "Mencius." <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/Mencius> (accessed October 16, 2010).

<sup>29</sup> This is the most "intimate" relationship of all and thus it is first listed among the five items. I put it as "intimacy between father and son" but if I put more accurately, if the father be generous to the son, the son respectfully serves the father.

Korean society in recent years has achieved advancement in law, to regard son and daughter equally and husband and wife more mutually. The relationship between “father and son” can be therefore extended to a contemporary “parent-child” relationship<sup>30</sup> in which parents are to cultivate intimacy with their children and children dutifully obey and care for their parents. Despite the legal advancement, the predominant cultural practice still privileges the patriarchy of the father-son relationship. Therefore, it is useful to note Confucian ethics regarding basic human relationships; at the same time it is also important to pay attention to the gender bias in those expressions. For example, in *Bu Ja Yu Chin*, there is no female child addressed in this expression. I will discuss how this gender equality impacts the Korean Christian immigrant family in Chapter Five.

In addition to differences resulting from the influence of patriarchal Confucian ethics, there is a different emphasis on self and family. Both Western and Eastern cultures regard the family as the basic social unit. However, in Western culture, there is heavy emphasis on individuation of children to become their own “independent” adult. In Eastern culture, the individuation of children is to become “interdependent” adult-children.

According to Injae Choi, the family system is the basic social unit of Confucianism. In other words, in Confucian society, each individual family member is significant only when the family is honored. Therefore, while in Western culture, adults leave home and create their own families, in Eastern culture adults may leave home but barely change their ties to their parents and siblings. Even when individuals create new families, the ties between adult children and their parents remain significant and close.

---

<sup>30</sup> Confucius, *Confucius, The Analects*, trans. D.C. Lee (New York: Penguin Books, 1979). Cited by Susan Kim, “Changes and Continuities in Second Generation Korean American Families,” 90.

Family honor is a highly valued and sought-after virtue, and the achieving of family honor is more valuable than individual accomplishments. This family honor extends to national honor in the sense that the family is the basic social unit for national honor.<sup>31</sup> Preserving the family and bringing honor to the family is the most crucial task for individual families as well as for the nation. In the Confucian structure of nation, family, and individual, all are intermingled and hard to distinguish. This unique cultural connection among individuals, families, and the nation is an important foundational concept for understanding Korean parent-child relationships. This intermingling within the individual of the values of self, family, community, and nation still influences a majority of Korean people and it strongly implies that, to a degree, this aspect has remained in Korean immigrant parent-child relationships.

### Confucian Goals for Child Rearing

Then what are the specific Confucian goals for child rearing? Confucian goals for child rearing are traditionally based upon the teachings of two books: *Yuk Ye (Six Arts)* and *O-Shang (Five Personality and Character Traits)*.<sup>32</sup> The *Yuk Ye* addresses the development of good manners, artistic and physical skills, human relationships, and literary and scientific knowledge.<sup>33</sup> The five traits described in the *O-Sang* are honesty (*In*), justice (*Ui*), courtesy (*Ye*), intelligence (*Ji*), and confidence (*Shin*).<sup>34</sup> According to

---

<sup>31</sup> Injae Choi, 부모-자녀 관계 척도 개발 및 타당화 연구 [A Study about Parent-Child Scale Development and Its Adequacy] (Seoul: Korean Institute for Youth Development, 2006), 26-32.

<sup>32</sup> The Confucian goal of *Yuk-Ye* is an ancient Confucian educational goal that is not clearly manifest in the contemporary education system. However, the *Yuk Ye* and *O-Shang* are implicitly embedded in both public and family education.

<sup>33</sup> Six Arts: Ye, 禮; Ak, 樂; Sa, 射; Aui, 御, Suo 書, Su, 數. Available online: <http://enc.daum.net/dic100/contents.do?query1=b17a1998a>

<sup>34</sup> Yoon Sun Lee, "Korean Child Rearing Practices in the United States: An Ethnographic Study of Korean Immigrants in the Cultural Transitions" (Ph.D. diss., The Faculty of the School of Education International and Multicultural Program, 1999), 25.

the traditional Korean caste system (*Sa*, scholar, *Nong*, farmer, *Gong*, industry worker, and *Sang*, merchant), the scholar was regarded as the ideal man who needed to be trained to meet four curricular criteria: discipline (birth to 9 years old); pursuit of knowledge (10 to 39 years old); government service (40 to 69 years old); and retirement (after 70).

To become an honorable man as defined by Confucianism, a boy needs to develop rigorous self-discipline that allows him to create relational harmony and support the group, rather than insisting on what one's individual self wants. In order to instill this strict discipline, parents often use corporal punishment as a form of parental care. According to Wansuk Kim, professor of psychology at Azu University in Korea, the meaning of the body in Confucianism is derived from one's ancestors. Without one's ancestors, one's body cannot exist. One's body originates from the ancestors. Therefore, one's body belongs to the ancestors and family so that the owner of one's body is one's parents. One's parents thus have a right to control and discipline their child's body because one's body and behaviors represent one's family honor.

The body is not seen as negative as it is in some Christian traditions. Rather, one's body is a foundation for cultivating one's mind so that one's body has to be disciplined. It is also addressed in language. In Confucianism and in the Chinese language, 身 means one's outlook, as well as one's body. Therefore, controlling one's body and mind is the basis of one's social life. And, parents' disciplining their child's body and behavior is out of protection and love for the child's healthy socialization. This culture of seeing the body as an important foundation for one's mind and body is also

implied in Koreans' reluctance to donate their blood or organs, and also in their strong interest in expensive outfits as a way to cultivate their body and mind.<sup>35</sup>

Since family honor is the most important Confucian value and a practice of Confucian virtue, misbehaving children cause their families to lose face or bring shame on their families. If one causes one's family to lose honor or brings shame on one's family, the consequence is likely to be expulsion from one's clan. Therefore, strict parental discipline is important for protecting a child's future, both at familial and at national levels.

In addition, Korean families see procreation as an important task for preserving familial harmony and the family's legacy. When the wife becomes pregnant, the whole family and the extended family care for the wife and show positive attitudes toward her. Once the child is born, strangers cannot enter the house for 21 days. This custom allows the mother and the whole family to take care of the newborn baby's needs and nurture the special bonding between the mother and the infant, especially during nursing.<sup>36</sup> For similar reasons, Korean mothers/caretakers wrap infants in a shawl or blanket and strap them on their backs. This is called the "piggyback" position and is thought to create a physical and emotional bond between the mother and the infant in order to facilitate the infant's emotional development.<sup>37</sup> This piggyback position is still common even though there are other types of tools and ways to hold babies in modern Korean society. However, the use of this holding position may vary among the classes as it is generally

---

<sup>35</sup> Wansuk Kim, "A Diagnosis: The Meaning of The Human Body in the Past and the Present [진단: 전통 속의 몸 vs. 현대의 몸]," *Webzine*. July, 2003. <http://www.lgad.co.kr/webzine/030708/edition2.asp> (accessed October 16, 2010).

<sup>36</sup> Debra Cha, "Korean American Parenting Style Across Different Age Groups" (Ph.D. diss., Alliant International University, 2007), 17.

<sup>37</sup> Debra Cha, "Korean American Parenting Style," 17.

known that royal class women do not raise their children as lower class women do. In general, royal class women have nannies to take care of their children. Therefore, while the piggyback position is common in Korean culture, there may be some class-related differences.

A series of surveys regarding care of infants in Korea indicates that 90% of infants sleep with their mothers, and most children sleep in the same room with their parents and other siblings until the age of ten.<sup>38</sup> Parents usually react as quickly as possible to their crying babies, feeding, patting, and holding them and changing their diapers. Ignoring crying and delayed responses to crying are rarely reported as a way of discipline among Koreans, in contrast to some Western child rearing teachings that promote such practices, arguing that immediately responding to a child's needs may be indulgent.<sup>39</sup>

This contrast between cultural values in child rearing may be thought to reflect different emphases regarding inter-dependence and independence. However, this indulgent/permissive stage ends when the children reach the age of seven, at which time they begin school. The words indulgent/permissive might sound negative. However, these do not represent negative parenting styles. Rather, I would interpret this parenting as emphasizing the parents' intention to provide psychological warmth for the early developmental stage of self-esteem.

As children grow older, they learn in most cases to obey their parents without questioning. Furthermore, they also learn the honorific forms of language and the

---

<sup>38</sup> Information on the surveys and their findings can be found in the following article: K. Lee, "Pattern of Night Waking and Crying of Korean Infants from 3 Months to 2 Years Old and Its Relation with Various Factors," *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics* 13 (1992): 326-330.

<sup>39</sup> Debra Cha, "Korean American Parenting Style," 17.

protocol for use of them, and their Confucian education begins.<sup>40</sup> Regarding Confucian education, Stephen S. Cha's research indicates three different stages of the parent-child relationship; 1) the period of affection (from infancy to the late toddler or pre-school age); 2) the period of discipline and education (school-age); and 3) the period of dutifulness (from marriage throughout adulthood).<sup>41</sup> When children reach school age, they face high parental demands for academic success. The importance of children's education probably derives from the Confucian tradition that the ideal person is the scholar who passes the government exam, becomes a governor and, finally, brings the family and nation honor. Studying means becoming an ideal person, as well as maintaining or attaining high social class.

Among contemporary Koreans, the importance of education rooted in Confucian tradition and the meaning of the cultivation of one's personality and social mobility are still retained. This aspect is reinforced by the contemporary Korean social structure in which people who graduate from prestigious Korean universities have easier access to resources, opportunities, and networking and become part of a highly-respected elite. Originally, education and study were only part of the training for becoming an ideal man of the noble class (*Sa*, the scholars), but now education is open to all classes. The continued valuing of education and the goal of upward mobility come together in Koreans' drive for the best schooling for their children.

---

<sup>40</sup> Debra Cha, "Korean American Parenting Style Across Different Age Group," 17.

<sup>41</sup> Stephen S. Cha, "Religious Socialization in Korean American Families: Changing Patterns over Generations" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity International Divinity School, 2003), 12.

### Three Types of Korean Parent-Child Relationships

In my review of the literature, I found three types of Korean parent-child relationships consistently discussed: 1) intimacy between father and son (*Bu Ja Yu Chin*)<sup>42</sup>; Strict Father, Affectionate Mother (*Eom Bu Ja Mo*); and 3) parent-child affective bonding (*Bu Ja Yu Chin Seong Jeong*).

The first type of parent-child relationship, *Bu Ja Yu Chin*, can be translated as “intimacy between father and son.” Due to the Confucian practice of male dominance, this type of parent-child relationship is named only in the male lineage. Kyungsook Song reports that the Confucian view of parent-child relationships presupposes the paternal role as central to family dynamics. The Confucian view sees both boys and girls as beings to whom fathers can give love and discipline. There is an expectation of strong parental affection and great responsibility from the parent’s side for a child’s well-being and future. Fathers’ affection is shown mostly through physical distance and discipline, while mothers’ affection is indicated mostly through physical closeness and emotional warmth and caring. During the indulgent/permissive stage, mothers are able to be close both physically and emotionally to their sons. It is implied that after this stage there are some physical/emotional restrictions regarding mothers’ intimacy with their sons.<sup>43</sup>

From a Confucian perspective, parental rights and responsibilities come from Heaven, therefore, serving and obeying one’s parents is an absolute requirement. Disobedience means not only disobeying one’s parents but also disobeying Heaven’s will. This strong moral and social obligation to care for one’s children and for one’s parents is

---

<sup>42</sup> Intimacy in this case refers to 1) the inseparability of the bond between the father and the son, and 2) their closeness.

<sup>43</sup> Kyungsook Song, “Korean Community,” in *Pan Asian Child Rearing Practices*, ed. Pan Asian Parent Education Project (San Diego, Calif.: The Pan Asian Parent Project, 1982), 51-76.



transmitted to the son, who is the only one who can successfully carry on the family's legacy. Therefore, the cultural dynamic of *Hyo* (authority) is passed on through the relationship between a father and his son.<sup>44</sup> The principle of *Bu Ja Yu Chin* is still ingrained in Koreans' culture and relationships. Therefore respecting parents and living with the value of filial piety for parents is considered to be one of the most important values and virtues in Koreans, especially for sons.

The second type of Korean parent-child relationship is called "Strict Father, Affectionate Mother," or "*Eom Bu Ja Mo*." Generally, Confucian Korean fathers hold the responsibility for discipline and Korean mothers care for their children's emotional well-being. There are certain behavioral expectations for the Confucian noble class, one of them being that the ideal Confucian man is expected not to express strong emotions. It is a common saying that when it rains, the noble man never runs. In this way, the noble man dignifies his position as a noble man. Confucian noble class families have a rigorous educational program for training in Confucian manners. Disallowance of sharing one's emotions, including affection toward one's children, is part of this program. Conversely, a mother's responsibility is to take care of her children's needs and in this way to bond with them. Thus, traditionally, the mother holds the responsibility for the children's psychological bonding and physical well-being, while the father holds the authority to teach, educate, and discipline the future scholar.<sup>45</sup> This role assignment also indicates the Confucian gender dynamics in parent-child relationships. The father's role as a disciplinarian and the mother's role as a caretaker are considered the ideal family roles

---

<sup>44</sup> Kyungsook Song, "Korean Community," 51-76.

<sup>45</sup> Yoon Sun Lee, "Korean Child Rearing Practice in the United States: An Ethnographic Study of Korean Immigrants in the Cultural Transition," 28.

for the respective parents. In other words, each gender role is limited to certain functions, and it does not include the diversity of differences in personality and family situation that might be found among some contemporary Korean parents. The increase in the number of dual-earner couples, single parents, and blended families has led to changes in parents' roles. However, the core virtues of control, authority, caring, and warmth mentioned by most Western parenting theorists are addressed in the traditional system of gender-specific roles in Korean parent-child relationships.

Youngshin Park and Euichul Kim researched Korean adolescents' images of their parents. In a survey of nearly one thousand Koreans (660 school-aged children and 344 adults) the researchers found that they tend to perceive their parents as one unit instead of seeing them as separate individuals.<sup>46</sup> When they were asked to answer a question about how they viewed their parents, the most common description of mothers was "affectionate" and of fathers was "strict." Mothers were also perceived as hardworking, sacrificing, and strong, while fathers were also described as hardworking, affectionate, and respected.<sup>47</sup> The majority of respondents in the research saw fathers as strict and mothers as warm, but a lot of children also responded that they experience fathers and mothers who are different from culturally defined images and roles like "*Eom Bu Ja Mo.*"

In another book, Youngshin Park and Euichul Kim analyze the parent-child relationship. They argue that the most important dimension of parents' relationships with

---

<sup>46</sup> Youngshin Park and Euichul Kim, 한국인의 부모자녀 관계-자기개념과 가족역할 인식의 토착 심리 탐구 [Korean Parent-Child Relationships: A Native Psychological Research for Self-Concept and the Role of Korean Family] (Seoul: Kyoukkwahaksa, 2004 ), 127.

<sup>47</sup> Youngshin Park and Euichul Kim, 한국인의 부모자녀 관계 [Korean Parent-Child Relationships], 115-135.

their children is absolute sacrifice and that children's counter virtue is filial piety (*Hyo*).<sup>48</sup> Most Korean educational materials and other literature addressing parenting affirm Korean parents' authoritarian parenting and children's absolute obedience, but they tend to overlook the costs of absolute parental sacrifice. Due to this absolute parental sacrifice, Korean children are supposed to show, and may be forced to show, their absolute obedience to their parents. Without an understanding of this dimension of traditional Korean parent-child relationships, it is hard to discern a way to provide culturally appropriate care for Korean parent-child relationships.

The third type of Korean parent-child relationship is *Bu Ja Yu Chin Seong Jeong*, which means, "parent-child affective bonding." From a Western perspective, this type of relationship may appear hierarchical and fused, but Confucian scholar Sang-Chin Choi asserts that this is the ideal Korean parent-child relationship, and he endeavors to describe its sophisticated dynamics. This parent-child relationship emphasizes parents' empathetic relationship with their child, in the context of hierarchy.<sup>49</sup>

Both parents and children empathize not much through verbal communication, but mostly through affections and behaviors. Sang-Chin Choi contends that parents tend to feel love from the importance of the blood tie with their children, from sacrifice, and from concern for their children. Children tend to feel love for their parents, from their parents both? Protected by their parents? Or protective of their parents? Parents usually communicate their desires through indirect communication and expect their children to

---

<sup>48</sup> Youngshin Park and Euichul Kim, *한국의 청소년 문화와 부모자녀 관계-토착심리 탐구* [Korean Parent-Child Relationship] (Seoul: Kyoukkwuhaksa, 2003), 101.

<sup>49</sup> Sang-Chin Choi et al., "Bu Ja Yu Chin Seong Jeong and Its Impact on Children," Korean Psychology Annual Conference Presentation, 1994, 65-82. Cited by Sang-Chin Choi, *한국인 심리학* [Korean Psychology] (Seoul: Jung Ang University Press, 2007), 42-43.

feel this desire of their parents' minds and hearts. This parent-child relationship is an empathic relationship. This ingrained communication style is based on feelings and “eye measured” communication between parents and children.<sup>50</sup> The distinguishing feature of this parent-child affective bonding is indirect communication, also called “eye measured” communication. In most communication styles developed in Western settings, the focus tends to be on verbal empathy style. However, a Korean parent-child affective bonding style tends to focus on the importance of nonverbal empathy. Therefore, in Korean culture, people tend to read another person’s nonverbal behavior as a way to find others’ mind, thoughts, and feelings. Instead of expressing something empathetically in words, they tend to use “eye measured” communication to read another person’s mind and heart so that they behave empathetically and thus meet another person’s need. How the child responds to the anger? When a parent is angry, a child tends to read her parent’s mind and need, and she tries to behave well as an expression of empathy. This cultural tendency is also related with the Confucian goal of child-rearing in which a man never shares emotions.

From my pastoral feminist perspective, this male-centered relationship and father-son affective bond is too narrow and is better represented by the term parent-child relationship. The use of the term parent-child relationships entails the recognition of gender equality and family mutuality. The Confucian Korean culture of gender inequality and lack of mutuality among family members will be more explicitly dealt with in

---

<sup>50</sup> Empathy is both an affective and a cognitive process which is related to flexibility of one’s ego boundaries. If one has permeable boundaries, such differentiation is not possible. If one has a narcissistic ego, one uses another person as an extension of oneself. Judith V. Jordan et al., “Women and Empathy: Implications for Psychological Development and Psychotherapy,” in *Women’s Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan et al. (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 30-34.

Chapters Five and Six. Toward that end, I will use Namsoon Kang's critiques about Korean Confucian familialism and Bonnie Miller-McLemore's practical theology of family that aims to empower the silenced voices and to recognize the rights of mothers and children.

It is also important to recognize the difference between verbal and non-verbal expressions of empathy as evidenced in parent-child interaction styles in Western vs. Confucian cultures. Western research regarding communication skills and intimacy presupposes the use of verbal communication toward the development of greater intimacy. However, the development of greater intimacy in Korean immigrant families entails the use of more culturally attuned, non-verbal ways of expressing empathy. For example, family trips and activities may be more helpful than family talks and conversation. Watching a fun television program together can be one way of cultivating family togetherness and shared stress management. In this way, Korean Christian immigrant family intimacy can be developed by more culturally comfortable and attuned means. Further suggestions will be offered in Chapter Six.

In modern Korean culture, there are still Confucian influences in parent-child relationships; *Bu Ja Yu Chin*, *Eom Bu Ja Mo*, and *Bu Ja Yu Chin Seong Jeong* are commonly observed and reported parenting styles. However, it is also true that parenting styles are changing, mixing, and are diverse in application and level of influence in the modern Korean family. Therefore, realizing the influence of Confucian parenting styles enables us to understand how those traditions are also influencing the Korean immigrant family in the United States, while also considering how traditional parenting can be diversely preserved or allowed to disappear.

### Korean Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

This section will describe the Korean immigrant parent-child relationship. I will introduce briefly the parenting patterns throughout Korean history. Also, I will add a brief history of Korean immigration as both Korean history and Korean immigration history in the United States suggest how Korean immigrant parents have had to acculturate to their new lives in the United States, with ramifications for Korean cultures. Besides these, there will be a discussion of three challenges for Korean immigrant parents: the language barrier, the system barrier, and the sociopolitical barrier.

Korean immigrant parents' barriers are also related to how their acculturation impacts relationships with immediate and extended family members. In the process of acculturation, Korean immigrant parents could end up being in conflict with family members, in the parent-child relationship and in the couple relationship. I also point out that one of the critical acculturation issues is to address the American dominant cultural values of individuality, equality as compared to Confucian values of filial piety, family hierarchy, and group harmony. Therefore, these immigration-related parental barriers, along with acculturation issues, impact traditional Korean parenting, as well as increase family conflicts and disconnection. Therefore, this section includes the challenges of the Korean immigrant family as a whole, changes in traditional Korean parent-child relationships, and the need to provide wisdom to acculturate their Korean cultural traditions within dominant U.S culture.

### Korean Immigrant Families in Transition

During the past few decades, Korean society has been inundated with changes brought on by the effects of the Japanese colonial period, industrial development,

population growth, urbanization, westernization, and globalization. Due to these overwhelming changes, the Korean family system has been profoundly altered, even though continuity of Korean traditional cultures persists. The mainstream parent-child relationship has shifted from an authoritarian to a more egalitarian friendship structure. Korean parents in the 1950s and 1960s stressed the importance of obedience in their children, while Korean parents in the 1970s and 1980s emphasized greater personal autonomy and responsibility. In addition, a decrease in the birth rate, an increase in maternal employment and the divorce rate, and more diverse family styles are all influencing the structures of Korean family systems.<sup>51</sup> Although Korean parent-child relationships are in a process of modification and shifting, in order to discern appropriate relationship styles for Korean Christian parents who have immigrated, the pressures and challenges are even greater, due to their need to adjust to life in a new country while preserving their families' Korean identity and honor.

What follows is a brief history of Korean immigration to the United States. This lets us imagine how this historical change in immigration may impact Korean immigrants' family relationships as a whole. Korean immigration to the United States began in 1903 in Hawaii with sugar plantation workers. Two years later, it is estimated that 7,191 Koreans had come to Hawaii.<sup>52</sup> Many of these first immigrants were Christians and semi-skilled and unskilled workers from Seoul, Incheon, Busan, Wonsan, and Jinnampo. Later, during the years 1910 to 1924, some of the immigrants were students, intellectuals, and political refugees who had been involved in an anti-Japanese movement

---

<sup>51</sup> Yoon Sun Lee, "Korean Child Rearing Practices in the United States," 47.

<sup>52</sup> Young-Ho Choe, "Early Korean Immigration," in *From the Land of Hibiscus*, ed. Young-Ho Choe (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2009), 19.

in Korea. The second period of Korean immigration is called “post-Korean War immigration.” From 1951-1964, 6,423 Korean wives of U.S servicemen and 5,348 “war orphans” entered the United States. The average number of Korean wives of G.I.’s immigrating to the United States was about 1,500 a year in 1960s, and about 2,300 in the 1970s.

After the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, there was a third wave of Korean immigration to the United States. During this wave, professionals and family groups came; they were mostly highly educated, urban middle class professionals and skilled workers. Especially, there were medical professionals and technicians for growing industries in the United States. Among the 25,400 Koreans who entered, 13,000 were Korean physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists. Since the early 1970s, the annual quota of 2,500 has been filled by a large number of non-professionals, family members, and relatives of earlier immigrants, and in the 1980s there were 30,000 Koreans who entered.<sup>53</sup> Changes in immigration law permitted the immigration of non-skilled Koreans. Thus, all these legal, social, and political changes described above have influenced the characteristics of Korean immigrants, and also impact family relationships. Finally, according to the 2000 census, the Korean population in the United States numbers 1,076,872, with 24% of this population residing in the Los Angeles metropolitan area (257,975), 15.8% living in the New York metropolitan area (170,509), and 6.9% living in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area (74,454).<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Jung Ha Kim, *Bridge-Makers and Cross-Bearers: Korean American Women and the Church* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 3-7.

<sup>54</sup> Ilpyong J. Kim, “A Century of Korean Immigration to the United States: 1903-2003,” in *Korean-Americans: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Ilpyong J. Kim (Elizabeth, N.J.: Hollym International, 2004), 28-32.



## Immigration and Family

Immigration has an impact on a family, especially with regard to parenting. Anna Cho asserts that immigration has a negative influence on parenting, because the immigrant experience causes confusion and discomfort for most Asian parents. For example, in Korean tradition, eye contact is regarded as disrespectful to elders, but in the dominant U.S. culture, children are asked to make eye contact with adults to show respect. Also, in most Asian Confucian cultures, women's main duty is to take care of their families and homes, even if they are working outside the home as well.

Not only are there trivial differences in daily living customs, but immigrant parents deal with major hindrances in their immigrant parenting. Cho's research identified three main challenges for most immigrant parents: 1) language barriers; 2) system barriers; and 3) sociopolitical barriers.<sup>55</sup> Language barriers restrict immigrants to a passive involvement in mainstream activities. System barriers lead to a lack of necessary information to facilitate immigrants' social interactions. Sociopolitical barriers also present one of the major challenges for most immigrant parents due to a lack of knowledge of social resources available to families.

Most of the time, immigrant parents are inactive in relation to their children's school activities due to their lack of information about the U.S. educational system and because of the language barriers. This lack of participation in school activities may be seen by school staff or other parents as indifference toward their children's education. However, this seemingly silent indifference is a way to protect their children from

---

<sup>55</sup> Anna Cho, "The Relationship between Maternal Stress and Mothers' Perceptions of their Preschool Children's Social Behaviors: A Cross Cultural Study of Immigrant Korean Mothers in the United States and Korean Mothers in Korea" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Texas, 2007), 9-12.

possible shame about their immigrant parent's lack of fluency in the English language. Therefore, these Korean parents' lack of participation should not be assumed or judged, based upon dominant Western standards, to be indifference.

Sociopolitical barriers prevent them from accessing essential social services and other support, such as public assistance programs. In addition to Cho's assertions, Yoon Sun Lee reports some particular difficulties Korean immigrant families have in relationship to isolated living, life stresses, cultural differences in parenting, educational pressures, language barriers with their children, and strong ethnic cohesiveness.<sup>56</sup> Lee concurs with Cho's report that linguistic and system barriers cause isolated living and cultural differences in parenting. As a result, immigrant parents have to face linguistic barriers with their children both within the parent-child relationship and in regard to educational matters at the children's schools. At the same time, like Korean immigrant parents with Confucian influence, they tend to think of education for their children as one of the important goals for child rearing, so that the lack of competence in language that hinders their active participation in their children's education can cause serious distress. In addition, they also have to deal with their sense of isolation because of cultural differences.

There are also parenting stresses other than these immigration-related stresses. Deater-Deckard points out that for all parents, whether immigrant or not, parenting stress is related to a parent's age, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), self-reference, social cognition, and self-efficacy. In relation to all these, parenting stress is defined as "the idea of a balancing act between the parent's perceptions of the demands of this role and

---

<sup>56</sup> Yoon Sun Lee, "Korean Child Rearing Practices in the United States," 105-117.

access to available resources for meeting these demands.”<sup>57</sup> In other words, parenting stress can be caused from worrying how to meet their children’s needs that surpass their resources or capacity. Parental stress is interrelated with parents’ SES, self-reference, social cognition, and self-efficacy, and these are all experienced differently in various cultures. For example, self-reference and social cognition include parents’ thoughts regarding themselves and others, as well as their styles or ways of thinking about self and others. For immigrant parents, their way of thinking about themselves and others may be challenged or changed according to their level of acculturation. This is one reason why parenting stress tends to increase among immigrant parents.

Andrew J. Fuligni and Hirokazu Yoshikawa indicate that SES is an important issue for immigrant families. Generally, parental SES is evaluated by the three elements of human capital, financial capital, and social capital. While human capital is usually measured by parents’ educational level, for immigrant families this is complicated by the fact that even well-educated parents tend to have lower earnings after immigration, because their education was gained in a different culture and language. Social capital is also a more complicated element after immigration, due to parents’ minimal socialization and access to social capital in the new culture.<sup>58</sup> As a result, for immigrant parents, normal parenting stress may be exacerbated by the particular conditions and experiences of immigration.

---

<sup>57</sup> Kirby D. Deater-Deckard, *Parenting Stress* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 6.

<sup>58</sup> Andrew J. Fuligni and Hirokazu Yoshikawa. “Socioeconomic Resources, Parenting, and Child Development among Immigrant Families,” in *Socioeconomic Status, Parenting, and Child Development*, ed. Marc H. Bornstein and Robert H. Bradley (Mahwah, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003), 107-124.

### Acculturation in the Korean Immigrant Family

As we have seen, immigration and acculturation have a significant impact on family dynamics and parenting. Since, in any culture, the relationship between parents and children is mutually influential, changes in parents naturally influence their children, and vice versa. One of the most critical influences of immigration on family relationships is family members' different acculturation rates. There are two classic statements about acculturation:

Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups...under this definition acculturation is to be distinguished from culture change, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation. It is also to be differentiated from diffusion which while occurring in all instances of acculturation, is not only a phenomenon which frequently takes place without the occurrence of the types of contact between peoples specified in the definition above, but also constitutes only one aspect of the process of acculturation.<sup>59</sup>

[Acculturation is] culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct cultural transmission; it may be derived from noncultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modification induced by an impinging culture; it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following upon the acceptance of alien traits or patterns; or it may be a reactive adaptation of traditional modes of life. Its dynamics can be seen as the selective adaptation of value systems, the processes of integration and differentiation, the generation of developmental sequences, and the operation of role deterrents and personality factors.<sup>60</sup>

These classic notions of acculturation help us to build foundational understandings about what acculturation means. The basis of acculturation is interaction between different

---

<sup>59</sup> R. Redfield et al. "Memorandum on the Study of Acculturation," *American Anthropologist* 38 (1936): 149-152. Cited by John W. Berry et al., "Assessment of Acculturation," in *Field Methods in Cross-Cultural Research*, ed. Walter J. Lonner and John W. Berry (Beverly Hills, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 1986), 291.

<sup>60</sup> Social Science Research Council, "Acculturation: An Exploratory Formulation," *American Anthropologist* 56 (1954): 973-1002. Cited by John W. Berry et al., "Assessment of Acculturation," in *Field Methods in Cross-Cultural Research*, ed. Walter J. Lonner and John W. Berry (Beverly Hills, Calif., SAGE Publications, 1986), 291.

cultures. Culture is popularly thought to include only matters related to ethnicity/nationality, ecological, and/or demographical phenomena. But more profoundly, the Social Science Research Council asserts that acculturation can impact role and personality factors. Therefore, this acculturation issue is important toward understanding the dynamics of immigrant family relationships. In order to research acculturation issues, different variables are suggested, such as: educational level; wage level; employment; urbanization; the level of access to media, political participation, change or practice of religion; the use of language; daily routine and practice; and social relations. The areas impacted by acculturation are numerous and diverse.<sup>61</sup>

Won Moo Hurh defines acculturation as “the changing of the immigrants’ cultural patterns to those of the host society.”<sup>62</sup> Hurh’s definition of acculturation emphasizes immigrants’ gaining competence in the cultural patterns of the host country. However, any definition or discussion of acculturation must also emphasize the loss of the cultural patterns of the native country. Or, in the process of acculturation, immigrants slowly integrate the cultural patterns of the host country with those of the native country. Though Hurh’s definition of acculturation has important missing elements, his analysis of the phenomenon of acculturation is insightful. Hurh points out that immigrant acculturation rates are correlated with English proficiency, exposure to U.S. mass media, food habits, cultural values, and social attitudes.<sup>63</sup> According to his research, half of first-generation Koreans are not comfortable speaking English, tend to speak Korean at home, and relate mostly to other Koreans. Further, nearly half of first-generation Korean

---

<sup>61</sup> John W. Berry et al., “Assessment of Acculturation,” 299-300.

<sup>62</sup> Won Moo Hurh, *The Korean Americans* (Westport: Conn.: 1998), 69-79.

<sup>63</sup> Won Moo Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 69-79.

immigrants never read U.S. newspapers, only one in five reads a U.S. newspaper regularly, and a majority regularly read a Korean daily newspaper published in the U.S. They also tend to maintain a Korean diet and cultural values.<sup>64</sup>

In order for Korean immigrants to relate comfortably with dominant U.S. cultural values and social attitudes, they need first to address the importance in their lives of Confucianism, which values harmony in the family, male dominance, and children's absolute obedience and respect for elders.<sup>65</sup> Brian Lee compares and contrasts Confucian values and dominant U.S. ideals. He notes that common American values such as individualism, egalitarianism, and diversity are inherently incompatible with Confucian values like collectivism, hierarchy, and group harmony. In the process of acculturation, Korean immigrant families need to assess what they lose and regain, and pick and choose for adjustment. This process of acculturation is seen differently among family members and causes conflict which, within immigrant families, is usually parent-child conflict.<sup>66</sup> This is not to overlook the impact of couple conflict which, in my experience, is also a critical factor in the process of acculturation.

One of the issues for the Korean immigrant family to deal with, as a whole, is Confucian values. They have to face the remaining Confucian values and how to live with new cultural values in a new land. Brian Lee notes in particular Korean immigrant children's ambivalence toward Confucian values. For example, the values of filial piety, family, hierarchy, and respect for parents encourage family cohesion and harmony. The values of respect and hierarchy extend outside the family to generational relationships,

---

<sup>64</sup> Won Moo Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 69-79.

<sup>65</sup> Brian Lee, "Confucian Ideals and American Values," 273-277.

<sup>66</sup> Brian Lee, "Confucian Ideals and American Values," 273-277.

and they are understood to keep Korean society orderly. Such order is sought and experienced as especially meaningful in the chaotic feelings that come with the immigrant experience. However, these Confucian values are also obstacles for the second-generation who need, for example, to be able to relate with elders more equally and mutually in order later to succeed in occupations in the United States. Confucian values confuse second-generation and other more acculturated people, who perceive equality in hierarchical relationships as more natural and comfortable; confused, they are left often unsure when to be mutual and when to be hierarchical. For example, in a more acculturated Korean community, a second-generation person will call elders by their first names, while in a less acculturated Korean community such behavior cannot be even imagined, given Confucian hierarchy.<sup>67</sup>

This challenging reality of Korean immigrant family dynamics is well illustrated in the book, *The Cultural Tug of War*, in which Young Lee Hertig explores vivid images of Korean immigrant families' lives. She reports changes in parent-child and marital relationships within Korean immigrant families. First, she discusses transitions in the Korean father's role and image as a result of immigration.<sup>68</sup> Traditionally, Korean fathers, as seen in the parent-child relational images of *Bu Ja Yu Chin*, *Eom Bu Ja Mo*, and *Bu Ja Yu Chin Seong Jeong*, or mixed forms, are considered the heads of their families. They rule their families and maintain the respect of their families not through verbalization, but through the dignity of their presence. However, in immigrant families, the father tends to become relatively powerless and isolated, and he loses his authority to hold his traditional

---

<sup>67</sup> Brian Lee, "Confucian Ideals and American Values," 273-277.

<sup>68</sup> Young Lee Hertig, *The Cultural Tug of War: The Korean Immigrant Family and Church in Transition* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 43-62.

parental relationship with his children and his wife. Because most Korean fathers who earn their education and social capital in Korea cannot transfer their credentials to the United States, they cannot maintain the same SES in the United States. On the other hand, they may have the same or better SES through self-employment, but they may not be able to keep the same “face” as they have in Korea, due to the loss of social capital.<sup>69</sup> For example, a former high school principal in Korea who works as a Korean market manager may still maintain the financial ability to support his family. But he suffers the downward mobility of his social status from “principal,” who is respected as noble and in a white-collar vocation, into the “market manager,” now working-class in a blue-collar job. In this case, this father maintains financial capacity but loses the social respect that could expand his capacity for broader social capital.

Within the family, the father usually has the slowest rate of acculturation to the new language and culture.<sup>70</sup> The slow growth and adjustment in language, as well as his downward social mobility, results in less influence in his family relationships. For this reason, there is a different acculturation process for many Korean immigrant mothers. They also experience relational changes, as they often must take on the double burden of becoming breadwinners in the United States. as well as being full-time homemakers. While there is an increase in the number of dual-income families in Korea, in the United States, most mothers are *required* to work outside the home due to the high cost of living and the decrease in the father’s earning power. This change in both parents’ SES leads to a challenge to the internalized patriarchal father images that previously determined the nature of the couples’ relationships. Korean fathers confront both internal and external

---

<sup>69</sup> Young Lee Hertig, *The Cultural Tug of War*, 43-62.

<sup>70</sup> Young Lee Hertig, *The Cultural Tug of War*, 1-26.



drawbacks in claiming their powers and dignity at home and in society. Once they were the icon of power at home and in society, but they cannot hold this power any longer. Now they are strangers in a new country. The mothers are expected to compete in the workforce and become empowered both within and outside the home. However, they still hold their internalized patriarchal father images, so they want and expect their husbands to be the powerful patriarch in both arenas.<sup>71</sup> Among these external and internal challenges for Korean immigrant couples, parents' relationships with their children need also to be re-examined.

Just as both parents are challenged in their acculturation, Korean immigrant children are challenged by changes in their relationships with their parents. Young Lee Hertig relates stories about immigrant children and their families from her twenty years of ministry: parents who treated their children as their personal property; parents who were very close to their children in terms of controlling them, but were emotionally unapproachable; parents who were physically and emotionally absent but also overprotective; parents who constantly asked their children to behave according to Korean cultural mores and at the same time achieve in U.S. culture; parents who forced their children to be involved in a Christian faith or community; and parents who influenced their children to think about money and success over Christian faith.<sup>72</sup>

These rather negative evaluations are what real immigrant children shared with Hertig regarding how they feel about their relationships with their Korean immigrant parents. There are positive statements about parents' support, also, such as parental

---

<sup>71</sup> Young Lee Hertig, *The Cultural Tug of War*, 37.

<sup>72</sup> Young Lee Hertig, *The Cultural Tug of War*, 51-81.

sacrificial love. But their critical evaluations suggest the Korean immigrant children's challenges to communicate with their parents about different cultural values and mores.

### Dissonance and Disconnection in Korean Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

Korean and Confucian cultures do not focus on children's independence, identity, and privacy. Rather, Korean culture tends to value harmony in the family, collectivism, and filial piety.<sup>73</sup> Korean immigrant parents and immigrant children struggle to find new possibilities for connection in this uncharted but experiential space between cultures. Immigrant children, who are more socialized in terms of the dominant U.S. values of individuality, equality, and independence, often face authoritarian parents, difficulty in communicating due to their parents' lack of English proficiency and their own lack of Korean proficiency, and limited supervision by their parents, which leads to confusion and loneliness in the experience of immigration and acculturation.<sup>74</sup> As immigrant children are trying to develop independence and individualism, their parents may criticize them as being "not harmonious, disrespectful." While their parents want them to be obedient and submissive at home, they are expected to be assertive in U.S. classrooms. When immigrant children try to communicate with their parents, they are impatient or they cannot understand their parents' "heart communication." Challenges like these cause an increase of dissonance and disconnection in Korean immigrant parent-child relationships. One Korean immigrant parent shares her heartbreaking story:

My son used to be very obedient to me until he started going to school. He doesn't act like my own son any more. He forgets the Korean language and tries to speak English only. He puts me down because I am not fluent in English. On a rainy day, I brought an umbrella to school for my son. He got upset because I

---

<sup>73</sup> Injae Choi. 한국형 부모 자녀 관계 척도 개발 및 타당화 연구 [A Study about Korean Scale for Parent-child Relationship and Its Adequacy], 26-32.

<sup>74</sup> Yoon Sun Lee, "Korean Child Rearing Practices in the United States," 49-52.

brought an umbrella for him. How can this kind of thing happen? This is not what I expected when I came to America for my son's education.<sup>75</sup>

A Korean immigrant child shares her heartbreak as follows:

When I have problems, I can't talk with my parents. I hardly talk with my dad. He comes home late. But, it is OK. With my mom, I try to talk, but she does not understand what I am talking about. After I explain everything, she gives me a blank look. I talk with my friends about my problems because they understand what I am going through.<sup>76</sup>

Many Korean immigrant parents are rendered nearly helpless by their difficulty in using English, lack of authority, and misunderstanding of their children's natural development in U.S. society. Korean immigrant children hunger to be understood and to receive adult guidance. Painful dissonance, disconnection, and suffering remain unexpressed. Is there a creative space for the conflicting values of authority, hierarchy, and collectivism to interact with the values of equality, individuality, and independence, so both vulnerable Korean immigrant parents and children can be honest with one another, not intentionally hurt one another, and be guided together toward deeper understanding and connection?

#### Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

This section articulates the Protestant church's role as both a major support system and a possible cultural trap for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. I describe the benefits of the Protestant Korean church's role in the life of the Korean Christian immigrant family, although it, too, is patriarchal, Confucian, and too ethnic-centered for much of the second-generation, thus decreasing their interest in joining their parents' churches. Therefore, I end this section with some pastoral

---

<sup>75</sup> Young Lee Hertig, *The Cultural Tug of War*, 50.

<sup>76</sup> Young Lee Hertig, *The Cultural Tug of War*, 50.

theological analysis to offer insights for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. From several Korean pastoral theologians, I would like to propose the importance of multicultural living to validate the multiplicity in the parent-child relationship, the importance of an “in-beyond” perspective to overcome both marginality and centrality for the Korean Christian immigrant family’s holistic living beyond their struggles in living between marginality and centrality. Also, the concepts of multiple selves and family understanding will liberate the Korean Christian family for multicultural living, which will validate the multiplicity within us and show how to “dance” with the “in-beyond” reality within our lives.

#### Protestant Church: Sanctuary and Cultural Trap

Given the numbers of Korean immigrants who are deeply involved in Protestant Christian congregations, it is crucial to discuss the influence of Protestant Christian theology. A review of the literature indicates both the negative and positive roles of Protestant Christianity in Korean immigrant families’ lives. Won Moo Hurh and Kwangchung Kim argue that the role of Protestant churches is critically important because a high percentage of Korean immigrants are church participants. In their research, over 70% of Korean immigrants in the Los Angeles and Chicago areas reported that they were weekly church attendees and often also attended fellowship gatherings, bible study, and counseling services.<sup>77</sup> Susan Kim also notes that second-generation Korean Americans have a higher percentage of church participation than other second or later generations of Asian Americans.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim, “Religious Participation of Korean Immigrants in the United States,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 29, no.1 (1990): 19-34.

<sup>78</sup> Susan Kim, “Changes and Continuities in Second Generation Korean American Families,” 35.

Young Lee Hertig describes the role of the Protestant church as a home away from home, especially for first-generation Korean immigrants.<sup>79</sup> Also Won Moo Hurh and Kwangchung Kim point out that immigrants attend church to meet their need for a sense of religious purpose (meaning), for social needs (belonging), and for psychological needs (comfort), which they can expect to receive from the supportive community of an ethnic church.<sup>80</sup> Korean immigrants yearn for a home in a new country. The Protestant church functions as a home, family, and Korean community for Korean immigrants. Therefore, this church community support system can be considered a “cultural sanctuary” and a “Sabbath of Korean immigrants” and can help to care for the mental health needs of both Korean males and females.<sup>81</sup> Won Moo Hurh also recognizes that Korean immigrant churches serve a positive function in terms of supporting ethnic cohesion.<sup>82</sup> Seongeun Kim et al. report that the immigrant church functions as a parenting partner for working-class parents by providing adult supervision and care for immigrant children.<sup>83</sup> Thus, Korean Protestant church communities provide an environment for helping Korean immigrant families adjust to life in a new culture with a form of extended family support. The role of the Protestant church community and Christian theology is critical and extensive relative to cultivating Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

Protestant Christianity may also have what can be considered negative effects on Korean immigrant families. As revealed in Young Lee Hertig’s research mentioned earlier, Korean immigrant children often are put off by their parents’ reinforcement of

---

<sup>79</sup> Young Lee Hertig, *The Cultural Tug of War*, 88.

<sup>80</sup> Susan Kim, “Changes and Continuities in Second Generation Korean American Families,” 35.

<sup>81</sup> Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim, “Religious Participation of Korean Immigrants in the United States,” 19-34.

<sup>82</sup> Won Moo Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 107-114.

<sup>83</sup> Seongeun Kim et al., “Reconstructing Mothering among Korean Immigrant Working Class Women in the United States,” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 37, no. 1 (2006): 43-58.

Christian faith and their inflexibility in reserving Sunday as a day to go to church. From many immigrant children's viewpoints, their own faith development and church support are important, yet they question what they see in their Christian parents' religious commitment. In this way, Protestant Christianity may contribute to division between immigrant parents and children. For the children, Korean immigrant churches may also be experienced as a cultural trap. Since they are asked and encouraged by their Christian parents to spend their time at the church as the most reliable community resource, they may not have a chance to explore other aspects of U.S. culture. Even though their Korean immigrant church provides safety and comfort, they may resist living primarily in this limited cultural space. Ae Ra Kim points out that Korean immigrant churches sustain traditional cultural models through male dominance and by requiring women's silence and submission to men in public life.<sup>84</sup> Jung Ha Kim also researches Korean ethnic churches and describes these churches as patriarchal, only allowing male leadership while tending to use women's service instead of their leadership.<sup>85</sup>

These negative church influences are also indicated by the phenomenon of second-generation Koreans tending not to join their parents' churches but instead joining churches that speak specifically to their needs. Korean immigrant churches tend to be known for incorporating some elements of Confucianism—age-based authority, emphasis on education, and exclusion of women from organizational structures and operations. Second-generation Koreans have tended to challenge these hierarchical Confucian values

---

<sup>84</sup> Ae Ra Kim, *Women Struggling For a New Life: The Role of Religion in the Cultural Passage from Korea to America* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 73.

<sup>85</sup> Jung Ha Kim, *Bridge-Makers and Cross-Bearers: Korean American Women and the Church*, 121-134. See also Ho-Youn Kwon et al., "Korean American Religion in International Perspective," in *Korean Americans and Their Religions*, 1-24.

and customs. They criticize the Confucian hierarchy; yet sometimes they realize their own embodiment of such hierarchy is played out when they experience conflict with an emphasis on individuality and gender equality as fostered by the dominant U.S. culture. Also, the second-generation tends to experience the Korean first-generation's male dominance as unjust. Understanding these dynamics, Pyong Gap Min and Dae Young Kim argue for the importance of intergenerational transmission of religion and culture. In other words, the passing on of Korean Christian immigrant parents' generation's faith and living needs to be researched further, in search of ways to create a dialogical space between first-generation Korean Christian immigrant culture and second-generation Korean Christian culture.<sup>86</sup> This dialogical space and openness is needed to enable healthy dynamic for both generations to reflect on the importance of culture, faith, and the legacy of both.

#### Pastoral Theological Reflection on Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

Unfortunately, within English and Korean resources in the discipline of pastoral care and counseling only a small body of literature exists addressing the specific challenges faced by Korean Christian immigrant families. Nonetheless, over the years, a number of Korean American theologians have poured out their hearts' desires for healing the pain of Korean Americans.

Literature in this area features a pastoral theological reflection that validates the multicultural reality of Korean American family and its psychological adaptation from a monocultural standard for self-identification to a multicultural standard. K. Samuel Lee's

---

<sup>86</sup> Pyong Gap Min and Dae Young Kim, "Intergenerational Transmission of Religion and Culture: Korean Protestants in the U.S.," *Sociology of Religion* 66, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 263-282.

scholarly passion for multicultural living is exemplified in his essay “Navigating between Cultures: The Bicultural Family’s Lived Realities.”<sup>87</sup> He asserts that Korean American families live in the reality between two conflicting value systems, that of Confucian collectivism and sacrificial love for family (A) and that of North American individualism and egalitarianism (B). He argues that the linear model of cultural identification that puts people into either-or categories is limited. For the multicultural/bicultural Korean American family, he suggests both/and living—both Korean and U.S. cultures—instead of either A or B living. Unlike Lee’s integrative approach, a categorization of either A or B for the sake of simplifying academic research overlooks and minimizes the complexities and messiness of human realities. It is important to note that simplifying human reality can be dangerous as it overlooks the real complexity of organic human living.<sup>88</sup>

In another article, Lee also supports certain elements of multicultural living that can be helpfully utilized by the Korean American family. He uses the metaphor of dance to provide a visual image of the challenges of multicultural living. He suggests three activities for cultivating multicultural living in the United States: 1) paying attention to unintentional racism, 2) making visible the invisibility of monoculturalism, and 3) sharpening consciousness of the “whiteness” of U.S. culture.<sup>89</sup> His assertions are related to Korean Christian immigrant parents. Noticing and realizing the unintentional racism immigrants experience, usually on a daily basis, seems painful, but it can also liberate

---

<sup>87</sup> K. Samuel Lee, “Navigating between Cultures: The Bicultural Family’s Lived Realities,” in *Mutuality Matters*, 107-118.

<sup>88</sup> K. Samuel Lee, “Korean American Cultural Identifications: Effect on Mental Stress and Self Esteem” (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 1995). This dissertation features a detailed argument on different perspectives for understanding culture.

<sup>89</sup> K. Samuel Lee, “Becoming Multicultural Dancers: The Pastoral Practitioner in a Multicultural Society,” *Journal of Pastoral Care* 55, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 389-395.



Korean Christian immigrant parents from their daily struggles. For example, Korean immigrant parents tend to see themselves as a minority not just because of their immigrant status, which requires loss of support and adjustment, but because of their race. In the dominant Korean culture, there is a high tendency to respect whiteness and its supremacy and see themselves as second-class citizens. Therefore, this internalized racism causes stress and emotional repression in Korean immigrant parents. Also, they have to cope with their own Korean culture and acculturation issues between their Koreanness and the dominant U.S culture, yet they tend to minimize their multicultural struggles. Last, Lee's first and third points can be intermingled in Korean immigrant parents.

In addition to K. Samuel Lee's support for the Korean American family's multicultural living and the values of multicultural standards for cultural identification, pastoral theological insight for the Korean Christian immigrant family is found in Jacob Hee Chol Lee's new pastoral care model for Korean American women who are the wives of U.S. servicemen.<sup>90</sup> Building on concepts from Jung Young Lee's *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology*, Jacob Lee has developed an Asian pastoral care model with three categories: "in-between," "in-both," and "in-beyond."<sup>91</sup> Jacob Lee borrows Jung Young Lee's conceptual understanding of marginality to create a new pastoral care concept for "strangers" such as Korean American military wives. "In-between" means that marginality has not a separate existence of its own, but it is always relational, in an open-ended, unfolding horizon. "In-both" means that there is no center or marginality,

---

<sup>90</sup> Jacob Hee Cheol Lee, "Shame and Pastoral Care: Implications from an Asian Theological Perspective," *Pastoral Psychology* 57, no. 5-6 (2009): 253-262.

<sup>91</sup> Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 42-63.

but only hybridity existent. “In-beyond” means the world is filled with centers and margins, and tensions between them. Therefore, a marginal person does not have to be bound by either of them. Based upon the “in-beyond” framework, the Korean American military wife in the vignette is poor, hungry, and unemployed. However, if she can find a place to call home, like a church or support group that can help her to find her a homelike location, she may be able to move the feeling of “in-between” toward “in-beyond”: she may find herself to be more whole than before, and moving toward healing. Jacob Lee’s pastoral insights are directed toward a very specific situation, but they can be used for some Korean Christian immigrant families who are willing to seek support and/or are able to find support so that they can develop a self-identity from “in-between” to “in-beyond.”

Korean Christian immigrant parents do not have to define themselves strictly as either Korean parents or American parents. However, though it is a hope to find an “in-beyond” perspective, I also want to acknowledge the reality and likelihood of staying in multiple variables of “in-between,” “in-both,” and “in-beyond” perspectives for the Korean Christian immigrant family’s complex life. They can find their multiple, plural identities and belong to homes in multiple and plural contexts. Therefore, this “in-beyond” perspective allows Korean Christian immigrant parents to live “in-beyond” traditional Korean parenting styles from *Bu Ja Yu Chin*, *Eom Bu Ja Mo*, and *Bu Ja Yu Chin Seong Jeong*, and another type of Confucian parent-child relationships constructed around developmental age as introduced by Stephen S. Cha. Even in traditional parent-child relational patterns, there exist multiple and diverse styles, with different emphases on parenting style. As we have seen, some focus on hierarchical and gender-based

relations (*Bu Ja Yu Chin*). Others focus on parental quality based on gender difference (*Eom Bu Ja Mo*). As Cha notes, yet another style is based upon age difference.<sup>92</sup>

Therefore, it is important to note the multicultural, complex reality of Korean Christian immigrant family's living, and allow for multicultural styles within which they can explore their parent-child relationships. Thus, these multiple choices can liberate Korean Christian immigrant parents in relationship with their children and this can create more openness, liberating space, and an "in-beyond" perspective to overcome their marginality and live with wholeness.

Also, in addition to fostering multicultural living, and providing multiple choices for the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship, fostering multiple understandings of self needs to be addressed. Soo Young Kwon's and Anthony Duc Le's reflection on the Westernized curriculum of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) reminds me of the Westernized concept of the parent-child relationship based upon the notion of self as a unit of oneself that is different from the notion of family as a unit of oneself in Korean culture.<sup>93</sup> Their article, "Relationship Building in Clinical Pastoral Education: A Confucian Reflection from Asian Chaplains," is not directly related to Korean American family issues, but it conveys indirect lessons for dealing with bicultural and multicultural issues among Korean immigrant families. They argue that the curriculum of CPE does not fully include the concept of a relational self as found in cultures influenced by

---

<sup>92</sup> Stephen S. Cha, "Religious Socialization in Korean American Families: Changing Patterns over Generalizations" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity International University, 2003), 38-54. The three different stages of Confucian education are 1) the period of affection (from infancy to the later toddler or preschool age), 2) the period of discipline and education (school-aged), and 3) the period of dutifulness (from marriage throughout adulthood).

<sup>93</sup> Soo Young Kwon and Anthony Duc Le, "Relationship Building in Clinical Pastoral Education: A Confucian Reflection from Asian Chaplains," *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling* 58, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 203-214.

Confucianism. They assert that the Western sense of self is as a separate and independent unit, while the Confucian relational self is considered a self in community. I understand why they criticize the presupposition of Western self-understanding for the CPE curriculum. However, I disagree with his simplistic appraisal of the Western sense of a separate self in contrast with the Confucian relational self, because Western traditions and academic schools of thoughts are varied, too. For example, Relational Cultural Theory, feminist psychology, and interpersonal psychology hold strong views of the relational self.

Nevertheless, according to Kwon and Le's understanding, the current CPE curriculum's three presuppositions are the value of: 1) verbalizing relationships, 2) building relationships by disclosure, and 3) equalizing relationships. As I have discussed earlier in this chapter, they note that most Asians do not build relationships only through verbalizing. Rather, the status of the relationship is informed and established by how two people address each other, interact with each other, and perform in each other's presence. Kwon and Le focus on behavioral interactions and observations as the most important ways of building relationships. In addition, "equalizing relationships" does not fit into the Confucian model of relating, which focuses on hierarchy in relationships. For Asian students, it is not easy or appropriate to seek equality with a person who is older or has a higher social status, such as with a professor in the same group. Intimacy by disclosure in public settings is also not familiar to Asian students. They consider the family to be an in-group, and they are taught not to shame their family honor and not to break family confidentiality. Korean Confucian culture makes disclosure more difficult still for male

students, who are expected to control their emotions even when they are with their families.

Kwon and Le's emphasis on cultural sensitivity in CPE education parallels the need for cultural awareness of Korean Christian immigrant family dynamics. Children who are exposed to Western education systems are asked, as in CPE, to make an effort to verbalize their needs and to build intimacy through disclosure, and they also come to believe that their relationships with others are characterized by equality. However, when at home, they face another reality—one of hierarchy, where much verbal communication is undesirable and where uncomfortable silences exist in the midst of heavy anxiety and tensions related to the process of acculturation and immigration. Though comparing CPE and Korean immigrant family dynamics may be considered a stretch, the comparison helps us understand the conflicts and tensions not only between Western modes of education and Korean culture but also related tensions in Korean American immigrant parent-child relationships. It also has implications for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships—values in the notions of self, equality among family members, and verbal communication.

The writings of Korean pastoral theologians Heesung Chung and Heesun Kwon suggest ways to create culturally appropriate theory and care for Korean immigrant families. Heesung Chung explores what a feminist pastoral method might look like from the perspective of a Korean woman.<sup>94</sup> Specifically, Chung wants to generate a method of feminist biblical interpretation as a means of developing a new pastoral counseling methodology. She compares Bo Eun Kim's case, one of the most famous in the history of

---

<sup>94</sup> Heesung Chung, "An Exploration of a Feminist Pastoral Method from the Perspective of a Korean Woman," *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 46-58.

incest in Korea, to the story of Tamar. Chung extends the story of Tamar with a consciousness of the powerful creativity in the gaps and “in-betweens” of her life. In this way, Chung gives new birth to the stories of Tamar and Bo Eun Kim, viewing them not simply as victims of family violence, but as survivors of violence, a more empowering perspective.

This method may create misunderstanding by seeming to treat the pain of the victim lightly. However, it opens the possibility to read the Bible from the cultural location of the readers. If some parts of the Bible are re-read by the Korean Christian immigrant parents, the message can be transformed from the story of victims to the story of survivors. Therefore, this new possibility of biblical interpretation can empower Korean Christian immigrant parents, who can easily be seen as victims and deficient in the eyes of the dominant culture in the United States. This new pastoral counseling methodology will require creative attention from pastoral caregivers in terms of how to use the Bible and biblical interpretation for empowering the minority. They will need to seek out empowering interpretations of the stories of biblical figures, with a view to drawing empowering parallels between such interpretations of the Bible and the lives of marginalized immigrant people. This new interpretation of re-reading the Bible will be addressed in Chapter Four.

Additionally, Heesun Kwon and Carrie Doehring offer important insights into the use of spiritual resources for the victims of domestic violence in Korean immigrant families.<sup>95</sup> Their main concern is how to help domestic violence (DV) victims, but the recommendations they offer to pastoral caregivers and communities of faith are

---

<sup>95</sup> Heesun Kwon and Carrie Doehring, “Spiritual Resources Used by Korean Victims of Domestic Violence,” *Journal of Pastoral Psychology* 14, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 70-86.

somewhat related to the care of Korean Christian immigrant parents. There is a correlation between DV victims and Korean immigrant parents. In another important resource, *Korean American Women*, Young I. Song and Ailee Moon report the severity of DV issues in Korean immigrant families and point out that most victims are women and children.<sup>96</sup> They also suggest domestic violence prevention programs as a way to help victims understand the legal implications of domestic violence and to create more resources for DV prevention. Therefore, Heesun Kwon and Carrie Doehring's suggestions for spiritual resources for DV victims are meaningful for Korean Christian immigrant parents as well. They assert that providing worship services and education to prevent further violence and help them to realize their self worth can be healing resources for victims.<sup>97</sup> This worship and education aims for healing and prevention of DV and it has potentially helpful implications for healthy parenting for the victims' parents. Kwon and Doehring see the empowering nature of worship as one of "shaping one's identity, and self understanding in relation to God, and to the world." Through worship and education, pastoral care providers can teach victims about the difference between voluntary suffering and involuntary suffering or between redemptive suffering and nonredemptive suffering. (Like many Christians, Korean Christians often believe that suffering is a test given by God.) Community leaders need to understand that women's private spirituality may be very destructive and unhealthy; for example, the influence of patriarchy may have led the women to believe that they simply have to "bear their

---

<sup>96</sup> Young I. Song and Ailee Moon, "The Domestic Violence against Women in Korean Immigrant Families: Cultural, Psychological, and Socioeconomic Perspectives," in *Korean American Women: From Tradition to Modern Feminism*, ed. Young I. Song and Ailee Moon (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998), 161-174.

<sup>97</sup> Heesun Kwon and Carrie Doehring, "Spiritual Resources Used by Korean Victims of Domestic Violence," 70-86.

crosses.” Leaders of faith communities need to see how certain theologies and spiritualities may lead women to become violence bearers, and instead, teach and cultivate healthy, life-giving spiritualities for women.

This project does not address the particular association between domestic violence and parenting issues. However, it does address concern regarding the potential for domestic violence in Korean immigrant families, in couple relationships as well as family relationships. Though in most cases, women and children are the victims of domestic violence, once the violence happens it becomes the whole family’s issue. Therefore, protecting, supporting, and preventing domestic violence are also important for the Korean immigrant family.

### Conclusion

Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships are affected by the traditional Korean parent-child relationship styles of *Bu Ja Yu Chin*, *Eom Bu Ja Mo*, and *Bu Ja Yu Chin Seong Jeong*, and also by Confucian values. Each parenting style has its own emphasis in hierarchy, gender-specific roles, affective bonding, and age. Therefore, these diverse traditional Korean parenting styles can be co-existent in Korean Christian immigrant family dynamics, depending on the family’s immigration period, family of origin, and sociocultural influences. Also, Korean Christian immigrant parenting is affected by many aspects of acculturation, including language, social networking, finance, and so forth. The Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship is also influenced by the Protestant church, which is considered an extended family or major support system. Seen from the perspective of these phenomena, the intimate Korean Christian immigrant



parent-child relationship is an important part of the challenges implicit in the immigration journey and experience.

The Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship can be a crisis as well as an opportunity. It can be a challenging time for most Korean Christian immigrants in terms of building a new kind of connection as a loving family. However, it also can be an opportunity for seeing the importance of familial connection for their immigrant life.

How can we create a more relational, connectional family dynamic for Korean Christian immigrants? There are numerous lessons evident in this critical literature review. It is important to think about how to foster values of multicultural living. This requires deep reflection on the value and challenges of multiplicity in multiple parenting styles, self-understanding, and immigration as a social location to influence a different biblical understanding and professional help seeking. More specifically, how can Korean Christian immigrant parents balance the implications of Korean culture and the dominant U.S culture for their parent-child relationships?

In order to talk about the value of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships, in Chapter Three I address Relational Cultural Theory, which focuses on the importance of disconnection and connection as the major source of human suffering and healing. With an understanding of the impact of Confucian values on the Korean Christian immigrant family's process of acculturation, I will point out three major Korean cultural concepts which can heavily influence the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship. Chapter Three addresses the following: how *Hyo* (parental authority), which has been considered a major structure for Korean traditional parent-child relationships, has shattered and deconstructed the process of immigration and

acculturation; how to care for Korean Christian immigrant families' pain, stress, and *Han* in the process of their general parent-child relationship, as well as their added pain in their immigration; and how to heal the Korean Christian immigrant family's connection as a source of healing the pain, *Han*, and for creating a healthy form of *Jeong* for multicultural living. It is helpful to start a dialogue between *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* with Relational Cultural Theory, which focuses on the power of healing the pain of disconnection. Korean cultural concepts of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*, with Relational Cultural Theory's three major concepts of mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity, will be discussed in Chapter Three with a hope to create a constructive dialogue for the Korean Christian immigrant family's connection as a source of healing.

## Chapter 3

### Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships: Interrelating Cultural and Psychological Influences

This chapter will dialogically explore the psychological perspectives of Relational Cultural Theory's three values of mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity and the Korean cultural concepts of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*. The insights gained from this exploration will be used to provide wisdom for culturally and psychologically appropriate reflections to foster connection in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

In order to engage in this dialogical exploration, I will first introduce the importance of disconnection from a psychological perspective. In Chapter Two, I reviewed the critical issue of disconnection between Korean Christian immigrant parents and children. In order to discuss the pain of disconnection, and thus the importance of connection, I have chosen to employ a psychological modality called Relational Cultural Theory, hereafter referred to as (RCT), which values human connection as a source of healing, and sees disconnection as a major source of human suffering. Then, I will use insights from the discussion as a lens for constructing an interrelating dialogue between RCT's concepts of mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity and the three values as previously discussed of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*. The dialogue between these two sets of values will result in suggestions for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Benefits, challenges, and compatibility and incompatibility between the two sets of values will be addressed, and practical suggestions and wisdom for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships will be articulated.

### Why Does Disconnection Matter?

Disconnection impacts human well-being. Especially when there are limited sources of human connection, disconnection can be an even more devastating source of human suffering. For example, Korean immigrant parents and children may value family connection more than other Korean parents and children due to the challenges that Korean immigrant families face. Korean Christian immigrants may choose membership in a church as a means of mediating the limited sources for belonging and connection available to them. In an immigrant context in the United States, Korean Christian immigrant families may yearn for connection among family members, as any family member would want family connection and intimacy. In addition to their practical need for belonging, there is also a cultural tradition that values group harmony and family cohesion. Therefore, these reasons are associated with the importance of connection in family and the disadvantage of disconnection among Korean Christian immigrant families.

Disconnection also matters because it is a major factor contributing to violence. We can harm others because we are disconnected from them or not connected to them in healthy ways. RCT considers the importance of unhealthy connection. For example, sometimes we hear tragic stories of family violence that happened between parent and child, supposedly in the name of love. Therefore, disconnection matters as a source of human healing as well as a source of human violence. Disconnection and connection are not good or bad by definition. What sometimes might appear as connection can be non-life-giving, thus making it more accurately described as disconnection. Based upon the complexity of connection and disconnection, I will claim the importance of disconnection

for both human suffering and healing. Further insights and definitions from RCT will be presented later in this chapter.

Second, there is a general importance placed on human intimacy and connection for human well-being. Furthermore, for immigrants, the power of connection among family is even more significant, given their distance from their homeland and family in Korea. In reality, however, the challenges they face as Korean Christian immigrants have added complications. They have to wrestle with general parenting issues as well as immigration-related issues as described in Chapter Two.

### Relational Cultural Theory

Relational Cultural Theory was originally developed by Jean Baker Miller, Judith Jordan, Irene Stiver, and Janet Surrey, on the basis of their psychotherapeutic work with girls and women. Alexandra Kaplan soon joined this first theory-building group. The motivation for the development of RCT came initially from evidence that women were being misunderstood and misrepresented by dominant psychotherapeutic models that assumed male experience as the norm and presupposed that autonomy, separation, and independence are the primary standards for mature psychological functioning, against which women were often judged deficient. Miller became a leader among other feminist theorists and feminist therapists who began to articulate critiques of the earliest psychological models and treatment modalities.<sup>98</sup>

Relational Cultural Theory was originally named Self-in-Relation Theory. Over the years, the theory was renamed as the developers of the theory sought to rectify the neglect of the earliest formulations to accurately address racial-ethnic and other cultural

---

<sup>98</sup> Maureen Walker, "How Relationships Heal," in *How Connection Heals: Stories from Relational Cultural Therapy*, ed. Maureen Walker and Wendy B. Rosen (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 3-21.

differences among women. As the theory grew to be more multicultural, it grew in its capacity to take into account not only gender and sexism, into account but also issues related to, for example, racism, sexual identity and homophobia, and religious identity. Thus, the theory came to be known as Relational Cultural Theory (or RCT). Primary resources for this theory are the following five books: *Women's Growth in Connection*, *Women's Growth in Diversity*, *The Healing Connection*, *The Complexity of Connection*, and *How Connections Heal*.<sup>99</sup> Other resources include articles written by scholars and practitioners in RCT that address the most current research, particularly papers published by the Stone Center at Wellesley College in the series *Work in Progress*.

Relational Cultural Theory identifies human connection as an important source of human healing and understands disconnection as an aspect of human suffering. If we acknowledge disconnection as a major source of human suffering, do we address the disconnections between Korean Christian immigrant parents and children? And, eventually, how can we foster connection between Korean Christian immigrant parents and children? How does Relational Cultural Theory understand disconnection?

I have described how many Korean Christian immigrant families face challenges related to navigating between the Korean cultural traditions of filial piety, hierarchy, and family cohesion, and the dominant U.S. culture of individuality, equality, and egalitarianism. Acknowledging these challenges, how can we navigate between Korean parents' internalized images of parenthood and a lack of resources in linguistic, financial,

---

<sup>99</sup> Judith V. Jordan et al., eds., *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center* (New York: Guilford Press, 1991); Judith V. Jordan, ed., *Women's Growth in Diversity: More Writings from the Stone Center* (New York: Guilford Press, 1997); Jean Baker Miller and Irene Pierce Stiver, *The Healing Connection: How Women Form Relationships in Therapy and in Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997); Judith V. Jordan et al., eds., *The Complexity of Connection: Writings from the Stone Center's Jean Baker Miller Training Institute* (New York: Guilford Press, 2004); Maureen Walker and Wendy B. Rosen, eds., *How Connections Heal: Stories from Relational-Cultural Therapy* (New York: Guilford Press, 2004).

and sociopolitical capital? How can we navigate between the conflicting aspects of the protestant church-as a positive cultural sanctuary and as a cultural trap? How do Korean Christian immigrant parents deal with the two different, dissonant worlds at play in their everyday living?

Although RCT attempts to attend to issues of diversity, I suggest RCT's insights are limited and culturally confined when examining Asian cultural issues. Also, as RCT was originally developed with women's development of self at the fore, we need to be mindful of this starting point. RCT tends to highlight the importance of the relational self rather than the separate self. I suggest the notion of the separate self and the relational self are both important for understanding the foundation of connection in Relational Cultural Theory and both are important also for the further discussion about diverse self understandings for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

### The Separate Self

In psychology, the notion of separate self originated primarily with Sigmund Freud. Like Freud's drive theory and Margaret Mahler's theory of separation and individuation, early Western psychoanalytic theories were based on the notion, as articulated in Newtonian physics, that things supposedly act on each other in discreet, separate, and measurable ways.<sup>100</sup> Two main consequent social effects in Western democratic societies are the high value accorded to the sanctity of individual freedom and a pattern of viewing infants as helpless beings dependent on adult parents' (caregivers')

---

<sup>100</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 18 (London: Hogarth, 1920), 27; M. Mahler, F. Pine., and A. Bergman, *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant: Symbiosis and Individuation* (New York: Basic Books, 1975). Freud and Mahler are cited by Judith V. Jordan, "Empathy and Self Boundaries," in *Women's Growth in Connection*, ed. Judith V. Jordan et al. (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 67.

help. In contrast to this Freudian view of infant helplessness, there are other views regarding infant independence. For example, according to Japanese cultural notions, an infant is initially an independent being, psychologically speaking; it becomes more dependent later in life. In psychology, the earliest study of the psyche was founded on the notion of a separate self, with the human ego being viewed as something that has to be protected from both internal impulses and external needs.<sup>101</sup> Freud illustrated this view when he wrote, “Protection against stimuli is an almost more important function for the living organism than reception of stimuli.”<sup>102</sup>

Similarly, because of his focus on biological influences on individual psychology, Freud considered drives and impulses to be more important than relationships and environment for the development of the self. The separation-individuation model, also part of the earliest articulations of psychoanalysis, was similarly based on the concept of the separate self.<sup>103</sup> This theory presupposed normal development as an increased development of the separate and individuated self. Also, in many psychodynamic theories within this tradition, the cause of mental illness was based upon disruption of healthy separate boundaries between self and others. Therefore, the protected, separated, and individuated unit as a self was an important assertion in early psychodynamic theory.

---

<sup>101</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” 27. Cited by Judith V. Jordan, “Empathy and Self Boundaries,” 67-68.

<sup>102</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” 27. Cited by Judith V. Jordan, “Empathy and Self Boundaries,” 67-68.

<sup>103</sup> Judith V. Jordan, “Empathy and Self Boundaries,” 68.



### The Relational Self<sup>104</sup>

There are, however, other schools of thought in psychoanalysis that particularly value relationships as essential for the development of the self. One of the first to turn away from Freud's instinct-driven model to one based on relationships is Harry Stack Sullivan. Sullivan argues that "a personality can never be isolated from the complex of interpersonal relations in which the person lives and has his being."<sup>105</sup> For Sullivan, the importance of environmental influences applies not only to the influences of other individuals but also the influence of cultures. Erikson's developmental psychology shares a similar stance. Unlike Freud, Erikson focuses on the psychosocial dimensions of developing one's identity. However, in his developmental theory, intimacy does not develop at the same time as identity. So, although he values psychosocial contexts in his theory, Erikson portrays the self as not originally relational. He asserts a human capacity to form conscious and mutual intimacy at a certain developmental stage.<sup>106</sup>

Object relations theorists validate the environment and interpersonal relationships as influential in the development of one's self.<sup>107</sup> Jordan asserts that because they argue that infants see others as "objects," they presuppose that infants are born without relational capacities. However, later, Heinz Kohut, and later still, Jean Baker

---

<sup>104</sup> Related to the concept of relational self is a theory called relational psychoanalysis as advocated by Pamela Cooper-White. I will discuss her contributions to my work more thoroughly in Chapter Five.

<sup>105</sup> Harry Stack Sullivan, *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* (New York: Norton, 1953), 10. Cited by Judith V. Jordan, "Introduction," in *Women's Growth in Connection*, 2.

<sup>106</sup> Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1963). Cited by Judith V. Jordan, "A Relational Perspective for Understanding Women's Development," in *Women's Growth in Diversity*, ed. Judith V. Jordan et al., (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 11.

<sup>107</sup> Judith V. Jordan, "A Relational Perspective for Understanding Women's Development," 12.

Miller, posit the special importance of what might be called “relational self” in women.<sup>108</sup>

The difference and connections between a separate self and relational self are well portrayed by George Klein, who first points out the imbalance of self theory. He critiques traditional self theory as focusing only on the nature of self as autonomous, distinct from others. However, he asserts that another important awareness; that one’s self is constructed as a necessary part of “a unit transcending one’s autonomous actions,” thus indicating the importance of self as both autonomous and connected.<sup>109</sup> These are both necessary parts of the human self. Recently, system theories also support individuals and their boundaries as being located within a broader system.

### The Development of Women’s Sense of Self

Interest in the relational self initially came from feminist psychologists, including not only Jean Baker Miller but also Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan. They challenged the traditional way of seeing human development, which had been theorized primarily from men’s perspectives. They created a new developmental theory to include the experiences of girls and women.<sup>110</sup>

First, Miller wrote *Toward a New Psychology of Women* as a way of criticizing the traditional male-centered psychology, which, she says, creates

Tragic confusion arises because subordinates absorb a large part of the untruths created by the dominants; there are a great many blacks who feel inferior to whites, and women who still believe they are less important

---

<sup>108</sup> Heinz Kohut, “Selected Problems of Self Psychology Theory,” in *Reflections on Self Psychology*, ed. J. Lichtenberg and S. Kaplan ( Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic , 1983); Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976); George Klein, *Psychoanalytic Theory: An Explanation of Essentials* (New York: International Universities, 1976). Kohut, Miller, and Klein are all cited by Judith V. Jordan, “Empathy and Self Boundaries,” 67-68.

<sup>109</sup> Judith V. Jordan, “Introduction,” in *Women’s Growth in Connection*, 2.

<sup>110</sup> Judith V. Jordan, “A Relational Perspective for Understanding Women’s Development,” *Women’s Growth in Diversity*, 13.

than men. . . Within each subordinate group, there are tendencies for some members to imitate the dominants.<sup>111</sup>

As a result of the preassumption that women are a subordinate group in most societies, the dominant males subsume women's experiences into those of males. For example, although Freud asserts that he is developing his theory from bodily, sexual, and children's experiences, it in fact assumes mainly male (infant and adult) perspectives. Not content with this reality, Miller asserts that women need to have a psychological theory through which to understand their particular experiences and development; they should not be subsumed into the same category as men. She sees the core characteristic for women's existence as "being in relation," as opposed to Freud's notion of a separate sense of self.<sup>112</sup> She argues that the Freudian notion of a separate self cannot adequately include women's experience, so that this notion of self cannot represent women's sense of self. Miller posits that development of a separate sense of self ignores the complexity of the interaction between a caretaker—typically female—and an infant. By extension, this theory underestimates the importance of human interaction as an important part of self understanding.<sup>113</sup>

Nancy Chodorow's particular contribution was her focus on the differences between a mother's relationship with a daughter and with a son. She theorized that the gender differences of infants lead them to identify differently with the mother, such that typically an infant boy tends to objectify his mother, while an infant girl tends to identify

---

<sup>111</sup> Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976), 11.

<sup>112</sup> Jean Baker Miller, *The Development of Women's Sense of Self*, Work in Progress (Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies), no. 12 (Wellesley, Mass.: Stone Center, Wellesley Center for Women, Wellesley College, 2002), 1. Cited by Judith V. Jordan, "A Relational Perspective for Understanding Women's Development," *Women's Growth in Diversity*, 14.

<sup>113</sup> Jean Baker Miller, "The Development of Women's Sense of Self," in *Women's Growth in Connection*, 14.

with her mother. The daughter's identification with her mother helps her to develop a particularly strong bond with her mother and is the pattern for women's relationality more broadly.<sup>114</sup>

Carol Gilligan's research claimed that women's moral development does not fit into the same categories as those proposed by Lawrence Kohlberg, which took account mainly of men's experience.<sup>115</sup> Until Gilligan presented the results of her research, the disparity between men's moral reasoning and women's approach to moral decision-making had been attributed to women's failure to develop "advanced" moral reasoning skills. However, Gilligan agreed that women have a unique way of developing morally and that this has a great deal to do with women's orientation toward caretaking and relationship-building.<sup>116</sup>

Both Chodorow's and Gilligan's work have contributed to bringing out the importance of disregarded, prejudged, and devalued aspects of girls' and women's experiences, such as mothering, the positive value of dependence, nurturance, and care for relational self development, and the need to broaden the category of moral development for both men and women. However, it is also important not to forget that these assertions can reinforce women's internalized oppression that results from patriarchy. Their work can help women's liberation, but may also contribute to their being trapped in an essentialist view of "feminine" experience that is highly reactive to

---

<sup>114</sup> Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

<sup>115</sup> Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Psychology of Moral Development: The Nature and Validity of Moral Stages* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984).

<sup>116</sup> Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

and thus limited by patriarchy. In order to validate the relational self and interconnectedness, this ambiguity and complexity always need to be kept in mind.

As Chodorow, Gilligan, and other feminist psychotherapists argue, the influence of gender role socialization is important toward understanding the six concepts in this dissertation. For example, *Hyo* originally represents male legacy in father-son relationship; therefore, I prefer to claim a gender inclusive phrase like “parent-child relationship” in order to include girls’ and women’s relationships with their parents.<sup>117</sup> Also, although *Han* is not a specifically gender-based concept, as Hyun Kyung Chung argues, *Han* is much more easily experienced in patriarchal society.<sup>118</sup> Also, *Jeong* is a common but complex concept to define. One of the challenges of *Mo Jeong* (mother’s love, connection with her child) is differentiation from the mother and child relationship. Living in the States where individuality is highly valued necessitates a re-examination of this Korean cultural way of relating based upon *Jeong*.<sup>119</sup> As this chapter continues I do not explicitly mention the role of gender socialization; however, throughout the presentation of each concept the impact of gender socialization will be evident.

Based upon all these observations and historical debates, as well as the sense of self that Jordan first termed the “relational self,” Janet Surrey coined the term “self-in-relation.” In turn, Miller, Jordan, Kaplan, Stiver, and Surrey, having formed the Stone Center for Development Services and Studies at Wellesley College, developed the term “being in relation” and created a new theory of self. It is like the development of a new

---

<sup>117</sup> Kye-Hak Lee, “한국인의 전통가정교육사상의 현재적 조명-효와 엄부자모를 중심으로 [A Contemporary Review on Korean Traditional Thoughts on Family-Regarding Hyo and Eom Bu Ja Mo],” 한국 아동학회 춘계 학술 발표 [Korean Child Studies Spring Conference Presentation] (1995).

<sup>118</sup> Hyun Kyung Chung, *Struggle to Be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women's Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1990), 42.

<sup>119</sup> I will argue the need of individual independence for *Jeong*-based relationship later in this chapter.

quantum physics theory that takes into account "the contextual, approximate, responsive, and process factors in experience" as compared to Newtonian physics that sees things as discrete and separate entities.<sup>120</sup> It highlights intersubjectivity and relationality in human nature and the mutuality of initiatives and responsiveness common to women's lives. This theory asserts that the deepest sense of one's being comes about in one's ongoing connection with others.<sup>121</sup>

### The Emergence of the Importance of the Mother-Daughter Relationship

With Chodorow's work, the mother-daughter relationship gained attention, and Freud's focus on the mother-son and father-son relationships fell more into the background. Chodorow argues that it is primarily in the mother-daughter relationship that a girl/woman develops her personal identity and personal power. This connection between mother and daughter is largely at the emotional level; later, this early emotional sensitivity develops into the complex affective and cognitive interaction of empathy. This basic emotional relationality developed between mother and daughter later manifests as the feeling of being understood that is crucial for self-acceptance and the feeling that one exists as an important part of a larger context.<sup>122</sup> These feelings are typically more developed and enduring in women, which leads feminist scholars to see major developmental differences between girls and boys.

However, this mother-daughter bond can also be seen as a cause of women's pathology, and issues from this bond become important categories of self-in-relation

---

<sup>120</sup> Judith V. Jordan, "A Relational Perspective for Understanding Women's Development," *Women's Growth in Diversity*, 15.

<sup>121</sup> Judith V. Jordan, "A Relational Perspective for Understanding Women's Development," 15.

<sup>122</sup> Judith V. Jordan, et al., "Women and Empathy: Implications for Psychological Development and Psychotherapy," in *Women's Growth in Connection*, 36-43.

theory.<sup>123</sup> Some feminist philosophers criticize the conceptualization and idealization of relationality as “feminine,” and I agree that there are several dangers and cautions.

Daughters’ fused relationships with their mothers can make it hard for them to find themselves. This is also easily found in the Korean cultural tradition of *Mo Jeong* in the parent-child relationship. The family is a unit, and within it each individual person’s ego and self is entangled. Especially, in Korean culture, a girl’s fused relationship with her mother can help her to develop a capacity to nurture, but it also limits her identity under the mother’s care and being raised as a girl in patriarchal society. Therefore, a Korean girl may have more challenging identity issues in terms of healthy development of a self that is both individual and relational.

Also, this early emotional fusion can make it difficult for mothers and daughters to differentiate themselves from one another. During the process of differentiation, when girls try to find their own selves distinct from their mothers, they may feel unsupported and alone. So, although women’s relationality is a helpful characteristic in women’s capacity to relate empathically to others and their environments, such relationality can be an obstacle as they try to differentiate themselves such that they may not be able to develop a healthy and organic interconnectedness of self.

Irene P. Stiver asks, “How [is] the Oedipus complex viable in women?” She answers that the Oedipus complex tends not to fit women’s developmental experiences, so to ask them to make that connection is to force them into something that for them is unnatural. Stiver suggests instead that gender identity is much more related to parental attitude and cognitive development. She argues that castration anxiety and penis envy

---

<sup>123</sup> Judith V. Jordan et al., “Women and Empathy: Implications for Psychological Development and Psychotherapy,” 40-42.

could happen to a little girl, but they cannot typically be applied to a girl's later developmental stages. She asserts that girls do not turn away from their mothers because of castration anxiety and penis envy. Girls attach to their fathers in addition to their mothers. In short, girls not only have strong relationships with their mothers that can at times be intense or conflicting, they also frequently develop passionate attachments to their fathers that can last into their adulthood. Instead of theorizing castration anxiety and penis envy as an impediment to women's maturation, this model introduces fear and envy as underlying and propelling forces for normal growth.<sup>124</sup>

Stiver shares her vision of alternatives to the Oedipus complex. First, she wants to focus on the mother-daughter relationship from a therapeutic point of view. She posits that the major source of anger in the mother-daughter relationship is the mother's lack of control in anger and love. She argues that girls suffer from mother's failure in anger because daughters tend to attach themselves to their mothers in a deeper way than most boys do. So, when their mothers fall, girls may feel as if their own future is at risk. In such cases, therapists help daughters to explore their relationships with their fathers. Therefore, instead of focusing on the Oedipus complex, Stiver wants to foster a new model which focuses on mutuality, and on daughters relating to both mothers and fathers.

Second, Stiver validates the role of the father. In 1971, E. L. Abelin reported that if a happy father smiles at his infant daughter, by the age of six to nine months this has typically resulted in strong attachments to the father. Whereas in the Oedipal complex, the father is not considered an important personal figure in a daughter's early

---

<sup>124</sup> Irene P. Stiver, "Beyond the Oedipus Complex: Mothers and Daughters," in *Women's Growth in Connection*, ed. Judith V. Jordan et al (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 97-121.



development, Abelin's research shows the important role of the father in early human development.<sup>125</sup>

Third, Stiver criticizes the hackneyed image of engulfing mothers, or mothers who cannot differentiate themselves from their children. However, the fact is that mothers typically spend more time with their children and are involved with them at a different level than fathers. Stiver suggests that instead of narrowly defining mothers as people who lack the capacity to develop themselves fully, fathers should be more involved in the parenting of their children. Furthermore, the traditional Freudian and patriarchal psychology that implies that boys have to dis-identify from their mothers in order to gain self-acceptance in men's eyes in itself devalues women and reflects the broader patriarchal system.<sup>126</sup>

#### Relational Cultural Parenting: More Relational and More Differentiated

Having briefly discussed the nature of the relationships between mothers and daughters and fathers and daughters, I have argued that there is a danger in relationality, especially in relation to the Oedipus complex in parent-child relationships. The closeness of a boy and a mother has been pathologized and has often led to early and forced separation of mothers and their sons—whether that is an early end to breastfeeding, sending a boy to school or even away to boarding school, or pushing the boy into a career or the military; in other words, into domains less dominated by women. Traditional infant psychology indicates the importance of supportive mothers for infants of both genders. Presumably, a combination of mothering and fathering would be best and would enable

---

<sup>125</sup> E.L. Abelin, "The Role of the Father in the Separation-Individuation Process," in *Essays in Honor of Margaret Mahler*, ed. J.B. McDevitt and F. Settlege (New York: International Universities Press, 1971), 229-252. Cited by Irene P. Stiver, "Beyond the Oedipus Complex: Mothers and Daughters," 97-121.

<sup>126</sup> Irene P. Stiver, "Beyond the Oedipus Complex: Mothers and Daughters," 97-121.

parents to raise daughters who easily differentiate themselves from their mothers and sons who are more relationally connected to their mothers.<sup>127</sup> Whether it is a boy or girl, we want to raise both girls and boys who are relational and self-reliant. RCT's relational sense of self is found on the value of relationality as well as the self-reliant aspect of self. Therefore, I would name it as "relational cultural parenting," with the aim of raising our children both relationally and self-reliantly. This relational cultural parenting can reflect the particularities of a child's race, gender, sexuality and other cultural factors in the formation of parent-child relationships. However, the emphasis would be on relational cultural parenting fostering the capacity for both relationality and self-reliance in the connection of the parent-child relationship, whatever the culture.

Although the direction of development may vary from individual to individual or according to different families' ways of relating, relational cultural parenting for Korean Christian immigrant parents asserts the value of boys becoming more relational with their fathers, and girls becoming more differentiated from their mothers. The primary aim of RCT is growth-fostering relationship in general. This theory argues that the primary cause of human suffering is disconnection and that a human deep and authentic human connection can heal woundedness. If this assertion is applied through relational cultural parenting to the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship, this parenting modality may well heal those who are experiencing disconnection exacerbated by prevalent parenting, immigration, and other cultural understandings that put pressure on Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Relational cultural parenting has

---

<sup>127</sup> Cate Dooley and Nikki M. Fedele, "Mothers and Sons: Raising Relational Boys," in *The Complexity of Connection*, ed. Judith V. Jordan et al (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 220-248.

the potential to heal the suffering caused by disconnection in Korean Christian immigrant families—between the parents and children and the disconnection within each member.

### Connection in RCT

In this section, I present the definitions of connection and disconnection according to RCT. Insights drawn from this description will be applied to the unique context of Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship. RCT defines connection as a growth-fostering relationship characterized by harmony, warm support, and pleasant feelings, and it is mainly based on a fundamental respect.<sup>128</sup> In order to experience this kind of connection, each person in relationship has to participate mutually. According to RCT, each person in relationship has to participate mutually in exposure, curiosity, and openness to possibility. Therefore, connection in RCT does not promise comfort but rather safe, intimate relationship in contrast to distancing humiliation and contempt.<sup>129</sup> Jean Baker Miller asserts the importance of understanding both men's and women's anger. In considering deep connection, we also need to think about conflict, making anger a natural part of human dynamics. Miller argues that our society emphasizes the problem of anger but offers less dialogue about how to release such anger in a constructive way. Regarding this dilemma Miller writes:

Our problems with anger are due to insufficient *real* experience of anger and insufficient allowance for its direct expression at the time when and in the ways in which it could be appropriate—when it need not have the connotations of harm, abuse, or violence. For men, the deflection of aggressive action is the problem. For women, the problem is a situation of subordination that continually produces anger, along with the culture's intolerance of women's direct expression of any anger in any form.<sup>130</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> Maureen Walker. "How Relationships Heal," 8-9.

<sup>129</sup> Maureen Walker. "How Relationships Heal," 8-9.

<sup>130</sup> Jean Baker Miller, "The Construction of Anger in Women and Men," in *Women's Growth in Connection*, 193.

Therefore, the problem with anger is not its existence but with its misguided understanding and release. Also, gender differences regarding anger highlight the complex role of anger in forming a deep connection between women and men. In order to create an authentic connection, especially out of abuse, harm, and disconnection, anger can serve as a necessary emotion reflecting the harmful situation and relationship. Therefore, RCT does see the importance of conflict and anger in order to create a deep and authentic sense of connection for human relationships.

In addition to this definition, RCT understands connection as a competence by which people relate to one another better. RCT's definition of connection conveys the importance of mutual participation in relationship, mutual exposure, mutual sharing to bring about not comfort but safety. Thus, this effort helps people in therapy—and in everyday life—to move toward growth in relationship. This message can be applied positively to Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Each parent and child can participate and share with mutual respect what he or she currently faces in the acculturation process. If parents and children can mutually respect each other, then a sense of safety and intimacy can result. In this regard, RCT's definition of connection seems helpful and meaningful toward fostering connection in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

However, here a challenge arises regarding the application of RCT's concept of connection to Korean Christian immigrant families. The aspect of mutual exposure might be a hindrance for many Korean Christian immigrant parents. As well, immigrant children may not readily open up and expose their lives to their parents. As described in Chapter Two, the challenges of Korean Christian immigrant families are their daily

struggles of living. One of the challenges is parental inaccessibility due to their busy schedules. Therefore, the lack of shared family conversation time might hinder their daily efforts toward connection. Also, the Confucian values of most Korean parents may not enable them to feel comfortable sharing the vulnerable parts of their immigration story. Therefore, it sounds like a challenge for both Korean Christian immigrant parents and children to expose their life stories to each other. The value of growth fostering relationship for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships is very positive, but there is a challenge to overcome the fear of losing parental face and to save family time for healthy and safe exposure. In order to overcome this challenge, I will further discuss the need to combine values from both Korean and American cultures in a later part of Chapter Three and provide more practical guidelines in Chapter Six.

In RCT, the quality of connection is made by relational competence. It is important to note RCT's distinct understanding of the term competence. The meaning of competence is different from such synonyms as “competition,” “invulnerability,” “being the expert,” “having an objective view,” “unilateral change,” “the value of hierarchy,” or “creating safety by ‘power over’ relationship.” Rather, according to RCT, competence is defined as “rational engagement over emotional responsiveness.”<sup>131</sup>

In contrast with the characteristics of traditional competence noted above, RCT asserts that relational competence is “the capacity to move another person,” “to effect a change in relationship,” and “to effect the well-being of all participants in the relationship.”<sup>132</sup> This capacity is beyond simply influencing another person; it is a

---

<sup>131</sup> Judith V. Jordan, “Toward Competence and Connection,” in *The Complexity of Connection*, 13-14.

<sup>132</sup> Judith V. Jordan, “Toward Competence and Connection,” 15.

capacity to participate in a growth-fostering relationship. The word “move” comes from the Latin verb, “*motere*,” which means to be in touch with one’s own feelings and heart. In other words, relational competence is a capacity to touch people’s emotions and heart, and thus to grow in one’s ability to connect. Therefore, relational competence occurs in supportive and empowering contexts. It creates community rather than isolation.

Judith Jordan describes the obstacles to relational competence as: 1) “power over” relationships; 2) impeding vulnerability in general, as well as in male culture more narrowly; 3) relationality being seen as a deficiency of traditional competence.<sup>133</sup> These descriptions of obstacles to relational competence remind me of the difficulties faced by many Korean Christian immigrant families. But at the same time, this can also point toward an empowering aspect for Korean Christian immigrant parents. Typically, Korean Christian immigrant parents are bound by the traditional concept of competence. For example, they feel as though they have to compete and win just as they were competent to do in Korea.

Also, in order to be competent, traditionally, they have felt they must be invulnerable, have an objective view, enact hierarchy through power-over relationships, and always be rational. These are the qualities they believe they must hold onto but they are qualities that they cannot maintain as immigrant parents. For example, due to the diminishment of parental authority in an immigrant context, they cannot assume a power-over relationship with their children anymore, and they cannot have an objective view in many aspects of their life as they did before in Korea. Since their capacity to be traditionally competent is lessened or even lost, parents may experience this as a

---

<sup>133</sup> Judith V. Jordan, “Toward Competence and Connection,” 16-17.

weakness. However, from an RCT view, if embraced rather than resisted, these losses might increase their relational competence with their children.

Relational competence requires an empathic quality in order to touch another person's feelings and heart. From this heartfelt quality, the relationally competent person can create a growth-fostering relationship. Korean Christian immigrant parents may feel they lose the capacity to be traditionally competent, and thus feel as though they are distant from their children. However, by engaging in a different quality of relational competence, their new competence can bring their family closer. Because it does not require certain external qualities or conditions, it can be a more approachable value for Korean Christian immigrant parents. If Korean Christian immigrant parents transform their losses and weaknesses into strengths and gains toward being a closer family, their lack of traditional competence can be transformed into relational competence. Their ability to do so depends in large part on how they transform their way of being vulnerable. This transformation will be guided by a new understanding of connection that influences the construction of more culturally attuned methods of pastoral care and counseling as presented in Chapter Six.

### Disconnection in RCT

Then, how does RCT define disconnection? What is the psychological impact of disconnection? In RCT, disconnection is seen as the major source of human suffering: disconnection make[s] people isolated, inauthentic, creates stress about having clear sense of meaning making, well-being, and engagement in connection.<sup>134</sup> There are things that make people isolated: 1) a normative emphasis on defensive disconnection as a

---

<sup>134</sup> Judith V. Jordan. "Relational Awareness," in *The Complexity of Connection*, 47.

means to feeling strong and self sufficient (e.g.: becoming your own man), 2) contextually produced disconnections (e.g., among women, people of color, lesbians and gays, and older people), 3) individual pathological disconnection that causes ongoing violations in relationship, 4) a drop in energy as a clue in disconnection such as creating negative affect and impasse, 5) a failure of mutual relationship, 6) withdrawal, and 7) shame.<sup>135</sup>

These factors and characteristics are manifestations of the disconnection that isolates people. RCT's understanding of disconnection is that it causes isolation, a lack of authenticity, and stress. Also, there are other aspects that cause people to be isolated. These factors are somewhat related to Korean Christian immigrant parenting. For example, in the above list, numbers two, six, and seven are all elements readily associated with Korean Christian immigrant parenting.

First of all, Korean Christian immigrant fathers may lose their hierarchical power with their family members because of lack of language, social networking, financial capacity, and Social Economic Status (SES). Therefore they may need to share their struggles, pain, *Han*, and stress with someone. But, as evidenced in the list above, a normative emphasis on defensive disconnection as a means to feel strong and self-sufficient (e.g., "becoming your own man") keeps pushing Korean Christian immigrant fathers to be powerful, self-sufficient, and pressing internally and externally to be the same strong man, husband, and father they were in Korea but in the totally different situation of immigration. This can cause frustration for Korean Christian immigrant fathers and mothers, and results from a lack of relational competence. Also, many Korean

---

<sup>135</sup> Judith V. Jordan, "Relational Awareness," 48-52.



Christian immigrant parents experience a contextually-produced disconnection. According to research, they tend to withdraw from their children's school activities because of their lack of knowledge about the U.S. education system and their discomfort using English. This disconnection from their children's school often also causes disconnection from their children's school-related issues, and results in a wide-ranging tendency to withdraw. It is also implied that repetitive disconnections and withdrawal may be a source of shame for them. Therefore, it is important to understand how the different aspects of disconnection may be present in the lives of a majority of Korean Christian immigrant parents.

It is critically important to note, however, there is another kind of disconnection—the kind people adopt intentionally in order to isolate themselves, perhaps to maintain their sense of integrity or authenticity. This disconnection is similar to what Carol Gilligan named “political resistance.” Gilligan's research led her to emphasize that girls can choose to resist when it is suggested to them that they suppress their understanding of life. If they do not develop such political resistance, perhaps in an effort to preserve the illusion of relationship or to fit into the only relationships available to them, girls' relationship will be less authentic. If a relationship is hurting one's integrity, authenticity, and truth, then disconnection is healthy and necessary.<sup>136</sup>

In order to discern healthy and unhealthy disconnection, relational awareness is required. Relational awareness is a capacity to discern the nature and situation of disconnection so that one can assess the situation properly. It is a capacity to know what

---

<sup>136</sup> Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan, *Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992). Cited by Judith V. Jordan, “Relational Awareness,” 50-51.

is healthy or unhealthy disconnection, and then to mediate the natural flow of energy from disconnection to connection. It is “a personal awareness, awareness of the other, awareness of the impact on the other, and the quality of energy, and flow in the relationship itself.”<sup>137</sup> In order to achieve relational awareness, one has to have a steadiness and a capacity to see the situation from a broader perspective. Obstacles are one’s “roles, habit patterns, automatic reactions, dissociation, reactivity rather than responsiveness, and affective over-simplification.”<sup>138</sup> Certain habit patterns are found in family relationships, for example: 1) secrecy; 2) inaccessibility of parents; and 3) parentification of children.<sup>139</sup> *Secrecy* causes children to develop a sense of worthlessness and lack of self esteem because secrecy makes children isolated from the world. They do not receive support from others and the world but instead fear them. This secrecy interferes with children authentically interacting with their parents. Since these children cannot tell the truth about their lives, they cannot truly tell about themselves or relate to others. This interferes with the basic developmental stage of developing empathic relationships.

*Inaccessibility of parents* contributes to a climate in which the child feels shut out of others’ experiences on a day-to-day basis and at a loss when trying to understand what is happening. Such a climate serves to intensify the child’s feelings of helplessness, of not being able to figure out how to have an impact on her/his parents in ways that can lead to feeling connected with them and empowered in the world. All these common kinds of inaccessibility can be seen in the families of alcoholics. The alcoholic parent is,

---

<sup>137</sup> Judith V. Jordan, “Relational Awareness,” 54.

<sup>138</sup> Judith V. Jordan, “Relational Awareness,” 54.

<sup>139</sup> Jean Baker Miller and Irene P. Stiver, “How Disconnections Happen in Families,” in *The Healing Connection* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 89-102.

of course, most inaccessible when drunk. Children growing up in these families talk about the confusion and anxiety that accompanies the felt presence of the alcoholic parent even when he or she is not truly present at all. Even in the best of circumstances, when the alcoholic is neither violent nor unpleasant, he or she will often not recall what transpired, make promises that will be denied later, and be incapable of genuine and consistent emotional expression.<sup>140</sup> In families where a parent suffers from depression, children also experience that parent as inaccessible and unknown to them. We know that depression is much more prevalent in women than men, and that there are many children who grow up with depressed mothers. Certainly, there is a continuum of degree, but any level of depression can be discounting and isolating.<sup>141</sup>

*Parentification* also blocks children's age-appropriate development, their natural expression of emotions, and blocks mutual relationship. In some families, children take on parental responsibility prematurely in certain important areas. This is particularly true for an alcoholic or seriously depressed parent. It is called as "parentification." In such families, the parent often expects the child to take a role or perform parental responsibilities at a level inappropriate to the child's level of emotional, intellectual, and physical development.<sup>142</sup>

This pattern of disconnection can cause chronic disconnection in children leading eventually to psychological problems related to connection. So, children and adults who are raised in a dysfunctional family learn how to be out of relationships through

---

<sup>140</sup> Jean Baker Miller and Irene P. Stiver, "How Disconnections Happen in Families," 94-98.

<sup>141</sup> Jean Baker Miller and Irene P. Stiver, "How Disconnections Happen in Families," 95.

<sup>142</sup> Jean Baker Miller and Irene P. Stiver, "How Disconnections Happen in Families," 98-101.

emotional disengagement, role-playing, and replication.<sup>143</sup> These patterns of disconnections can be found in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships also. From my analysis of Korean Christian immigrant family dynamics, as well as Hertig's description of immigrant family dynamics,<sup>144</sup> it is implied that parents' protection of children and their culture does not allow parents vulnerability. Parents do not want to be vulnerable as they go through the immigration and acculturation processes. Also, most Korean parents' Confucian cultural backgrounds cause them to protect their children rather than connecting with them about their own feelings and experiences of vulnerability. Therefore, children may feel their parents' hardship as well as their own difficulties in immigration; they both (parents and children) may not easily find a time to share their secrets with each other. Also, in many cases, immigrant children's acculturation in language fluency is faster than their parents'. Therefore, the issue of parentification especially relates to language competence and is readily apparent in many Korean immigrant families.

There is no one who is not yearning for connection. Like everyone does, Korean Christian immigrant parents and children also yearn for connection among their family members. Then, why are so many people suffering from a disconnection that they never wanted to create? People want connection but also have experiences of disconnection, such as hurt, humiliation, shame, etc., as a result of which they choose to disconnect from relationships through withdrawal. People often perceive this disconnecting strategy as a safe way to get away from their hurtful relationships. They want to disconnect themselves

---

<sup>143</sup> Jean Baker Miller and Irene P. Stiver, "Seeking Connection by Staying Out of Connection," in *The Healing Connection*, 107-117.

<sup>144</sup> Hertig, *The Cultural Tug of War*, 15-62. In this section, there are case studies about Korean immigrant children's and parent's experience of secrecy, inaccessibility, and parentification issues.

from abusive and other painful situations, yet they still yearn for connection with others.<sup>145</sup> This is what RCT calls the central relational paradox. In order to lessen this common relational paradox, caregivers and parents should be quite familiar with strategies of disconnection they have used to disconnect from their own painful relationships and experiences. Unpacking one's history of disconnection is essential if one is to be able to help oneself and others move toward transformation and connection.<sup>146</sup>

Another rupture to connection is found in situations of trauma. Trauma is defined as a "paralyzed, overwhelmed state, with immobilization, withdrawal, possible depersonalization, evidence of disorganization."<sup>147</sup> When there is a trauma, there is a complete disruption of the self-other-world meaning system. Trauma disrupts relationship with self, others, and the world. Traumatic people are inflexible, stuck, and bound to repetition. In such a condition, relational competence cannot function, for mistrust and isolation are rampant. Trauma hurts relational resilience.<sup>148</sup> Therefore, it is helpful to note that the central relational paradox and trauma can be hindrances for people who want connection but eventually end up withdrawing themselves to be disconnected from themselves, others, and the world.

### Limitations of RCT

RCT is a revolutionary analysis and critique of the Western, male-centered psychology that has been widely imposed on women's experiences. Critiques about

---

<sup>145</sup> Maureen Walker, "How Relationships Heal," 8-9.

<sup>146</sup> Jean Baker Miller, Judith V. Jordan, Irene P. Stiver, Maureen Walker, Janet L. Surrey, and Natalie S. Eldridge, "Therapists' Authenticity," in *The Complexity of Connection*, 65.

<sup>147</sup> Judith V. Jordan, "Relational Resilience," 36-39.

<sup>148</sup> Judith V. Jordan, "Relational Resilience," 36-39.

traditional male-centered psychology offer women the opportunity to see their experiences and development in a more authentic way. Making space in relationship for the values in women's ways of relating, knowing, and healing can make women's lives more healthy and open. Psychologically, RCT claims the importance of women's experiences by offering an understanding of a new sense of relational self. However, there are also limitations of RCT.

First, RCT can be criticized for sometimes romanticizing the value of relationality for women's healthy development of self. RCT rightly criticizes the traditional psychology of autonomy, freedom, and self-sufficiency. In a communal society such as the one with which I am most familiar as an Asian woman, women's selves are tightly interwoven with patriarchal society. Such women may need a so-called Western sense of freedom, autonomy, and self-sufficiency to be free from the oppressing system. Therefore, should freedom, autonomy, and self-sufficiency always be considered in conflict with RCT's validation of relationships? Couldn't they be contextually and individually combined for therapy? I wonder whether a self with autonomy and freedom could not be developed together with a self that has a sense of interconnectedness. Is it not too daunting to think about a healthy relational self in the midst of such an entangled relational web? For example, Korean Christian immigrant parents who have been raised in a culture of cohesive harmony in family may need to empower more of their freedom, autonomy, and self-sufficiency while living in the dominant U.S. culture where individuality, independence, and self-sufficiency are highly valued aspects of social life. Also, Korean Christian immigrant children have to think about cultivating their development of an autonomous self as well as cultivating a relational self in living with

cohesive Confucian family culture. It is not universally applicable to validate a certain aspect of the development of self, such as connection.

Second, in RCT, connection and disconnection have also been idealized and simplified. It might be fair to say that everyone yearns for connection and that it brings healing. Yet there are also unhealthy relationships from which people have to disconnect themselves, which RCT describes as healthy disconnection. RCT suggests that disconnection can be avoided by the maintenance of connection. But, it makes me wonder whether there really are connections that are simply and purely good and others that are simply and purely unhealthy. Relationships are so complex, multilayered, and changing from moment to moment. Is it not possible for both healthy connection and unhealthy disconnection to be present in one and the same person? Is it not common to feel ambivalent about discerning one's relationship with someone or something? After all, even one's relationship to oneself is constantly shifting. Specifically, how might Korean people who have been raised in a culture of *Jeong*, which can be defined as a fused relationship, warmth, and connection, understand RCT's definition of connection in light of their own lived experience?

Third, RCT idealizes mutuality too much in a non-mutual society.<sup>149</sup> Maureen Walker wrote a fascinating article called "How Therapy Helps When the Culture Hurts."<sup>150</sup> She suggests that instead of thinking of conflict (as it has traditionally been

---

<sup>149</sup> Jean Baker Miller, "Some Misconceptions and Reconceptions of a Relational Approach: Aren't You Idealizing Women? Aren't You Idealizing Relationship?" in *Women's Growth in Diversity*, ed. Judith V. Jordan (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 26.

<sup>150</sup> Maureen Walker, *How Therapy Helps When the Culture Hurts*, Work in Progress (Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies), no. 95 (Wellesley, Mass.: Stone Center, Wellesley Center for Women, Wellesley College, 2002), 1-10; Lisa Desai, *Relationality Theory in a South Asian Context: an Example of the Dynamics of Identity Development*, Work in Progress (Stone Center for Developmental

considered) as something negative, could we not see it as a source of growth in connection? She also asks how mutuality would work in instances of non-mutuality. RCT emphasizes the ideal and most concepts are, one hopes, applicable to many people. But there is understandable concern about how to advance this seemingly ideal theory in our non-ideal society. For example, how does the Korean culture of *Hyo* relate to any validating point with RCT's mutuality? At the same time, how can we value vulnerability in the Korean cultural society that considers social face to be so important? How can we value Korean cultural parents' value of not sharing emotions as a sign of maturity when RCT values honest exposure toward vulnerability and the cultivation of connection?

RCT has strengths that validate the importance of multicultural aspects for the understanding of one's self and it considers the importance of oneself and its relation with broader contexts. This theoretical intent can thus be applied to include the immigrant's reality in understanding of the immigrant self-in-relationship. Also, RCT's focus on connection offers helpful concepts and serves as an important modality for reconstructing growth-ful relationship among Korean Christian immigrant families. Moreover, research illustrates that there is a growing number of therapeutic cases where the RCT modality is employed with immigrants.<sup>151</sup>

However, there are still challenges and limitations of RCT to apply it within the Korean Christian immigrant context. How can RCT be adapted to nurture a nuanced self-

---

Series and Studies), no. 86 (Wellesley, Mass.: Stone Center, Wellesley Center for Women, Wellesley College, 1999).

<sup>151</sup> Sumru Erkut, *Diversity in Racial and Ethnic Self-Identification*, Work in Progress (Stone Center for Developmental Series and Studies), no. 264 (Wellesley, Mass: Stone Center, Wellesley Center for Women, Wellesley College, 1999); Sumru Erkut, Fern Marx, Jaqueline P. Fields, and Rachel Sing, *Raising Confident and Competent Girls: Implication for Diversity*, Work in Progress (Stone Center for Developmental Series and Studies), no. 289 (Wellesley, Mass: Stone Center, Wellesley Center for Women, Wellesley College, 1998); Maureen Walker, "Race, Self, and Society: Relational Challenges in a Culture of Disconnection," in *The Complexity of Connection*, 92-101.



understanding for immigrants, to develop an understanding of culturally relevant competent connection, and to understand the values of mutuality and hierarchy? How can RCT be used to deal with the Korean culture of face and vulnerability? Can we use the wisdom to find a common thread between RCT and Korean cultures of hierarchy (*Hyo*), connection (*Jeong*)? Do we also have wisdom to discuss Korean cultures of *Han* (suffering) and similar concept of RCT's vulnerability?

### What Connections Do We Need for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships?

In the previous section I have chosen to focus on three RCT concepts—mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity—because they can serve as counterparts in dialogue with the three Korean cultural traditions of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*. Therefore, this section includes the importance of dialogue between multiple concepts, for the sake of multicultural living: dialogue between mutuality and *Hyo*, vulnerability and *Han*, and authenticity and *Jeong*. In a dialogical fashion, I would like to draw attention to each concept's positive and negative aspects, as well as its applicability for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

### Dialoguing with Multiple Concepts of Connections for People Living in Multiple Cultures

My father's brother was drafted in the Korean War right after the birth of his first son. My uncle did not come back from the Korean War, and my aunt left home. Their abandoned child became my father's responsibility. He did not share the details of how his older brother was drafted, how his sister-in-law left his brother, or how he raised his nephew with his future wife. My father's marriage was arranged and he took his brother's baby as his destiny. Because of my father's *Jeong* for his brother, he took care of his baby. But, because of the *Han* that resulted from witnessing his sister-in-law's

abandonment of her baby, and in receiving the notice of his brother's death from the War, he did not share his family secret with his newlywed wife. My mother thought the baby was my father's baby from his previous marriage or extramarital affair.

The unshared pains of both my mother and father penetrated them physically and emotionally and resulted in distance among our family members. We all lived with a family secret that originated from collective and personal *Han*: my father's *Han* to grieve his brother's death; his compassion for his nephew; and his sense of *Hyo* for his brother who was the head of the family before going to the war. The *Han*, *Jeong*, and *Hyo* of my father's story has been entangled with my mother's *Han* (raising a husband's child as a young newlywed woman), her *Hyo* (desire to make her own parents happy, so that she could not seek a divorce), and her *Jeong* (relationship with her husband's nephew, her husband, and her own children)—all have prevailed throughout our family life. This family background resulted in *Han* within my own isolated immigrant life. But because of my sense of *Hyo* for respecting my parents who, according to tradition, are not emotionally supportive and available, and my *Jeong* which makes it difficult to differentiate myself from my parents' egos, I endlessly miss them. This results in a cycle of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*. The legacy of emotional repression does not die quickly.

Likewise, *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* are all intermingled in the relational dynamics of my upbringing with my own parents. This is just one story depicting how these multiple concepts can influence each other within the relational dynamics of a family as well as within broader relationships.

Therefore, in order to examine how RCT's notion of connection can be valued within Korean contexts, I will construct a dialogue between Korean cultural concepts of

*Hyo*, *Han*, *Jeong*, which are important Korean cultural concepts for parent-child relationships, and mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity, three concepts central to RCT's theory of connection. The concept of *Hyo* (both unhealthy and healthy authority) will dialogue with mutuality, *Han* (suffering) will serve as a counterpart with vulnerability, and *Jeong* will be a partner for authenticity. From this dialogue among multiple concepts, I hope to challenge the concepts toward the cultivation of wisdom for Korean Christian immigrant families striving toward connection in a multicultural existence. Oftentimes we employ a mono-cultural, solution-focused approach to discuss unanswerable, multilayered, paradoxical, and complex human realities. I intend to dance with multiple concepts to bring to light a multicultural aspect of human reality. My purpose is to begin a dialogue between RCT and Korean culture in order to develop useful insights for facilitating more growth-fostering relationships between Korean Christian immigrant parents and children. There are numerous concepts in RCT that help specify the nature and dynamics of connection and healing, for example: relational paradox, empathy, power dynamics, boundary issues, cultural controlling images, and personal relational images.

#### RCT's Mutuality and *Hyo*

In this section, benefits, challenges, and compatibility and incompatibility between the two values, mutuality and *Hyo*, will be addressed, and practical suggestions and wisdom for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships will be articulated.

Mutuality. In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "mutuality" is defined as "possessed, entertained, or performed by each toward or with regard to the other, reciprocal."<sup>152</sup>

---

<sup>152</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "mutuality."

*Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary* defines mutuality as "having the same feelings one for the other, characterized by intimacy."<sup>153</sup> According to these definitions, mutuality has to do with a quality of relationship. RCT understands mutuality to be important for relationships in that it can "provide purpose and meaning in people's lives" through the acknowledgment of "the importance of the relationship, the context, the quality of interaction and the deeply intersubjective nature of human lives."<sup>154</sup> This relational mutuality also focuses on "appreciation of the wholeness of the other person, with a special awareness of the other's subjective experience," so the other person "is not there merely to take care of one's needs, to become a vessel for one's projections or transferences, or to be the object of discharge of instinctual impulses."<sup>155</sup> This relational mutuality is formed when two persons in a relationship have and communicate strong empathy and concern for one another. With such empathy and concern, the other person becomes an important person, yet there is no merging of one's ego with the other, of losing oneself in the other.<sup>156</sup> Relational mutuality means experiencing mutual intersubjectivity, which is an "attunement to, and responsiveness to the subjective, inner experience of the other at both a cognitive and affective level."<sup>157</sup> Intersubjectivity involves "holding" another's "subjectivity as central to the interaction with that individual."<sup>158</sup>

From the perspective of RCT, mutuality is important to both relationships and to one's sense of being an independent and unique self. RCT's concept of mutuality is

---

<sup>153</sup> *Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary*, s.v. "mutuality."

<sup>154</sup> Judith V. Jordan, "The Meaning of Mutuality," in *Women's Growth in Connection*, ed. Judith V. Jordan et al (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 81, 82.

<sup>155</sup> Judith V. Jordan, "The Meaning of Mutuality," 82.

<sup>156</sup> Judith V. Jordan, "The Meaning of Mutuality," 82.

<sup>157</sup> Judith V. Jordan, "The Meaning of Mutuality," 82.

<sup>158</sup> Judith V. Jordan, "The Meaning of Mutuality," 83.

defined in part by viewing both the relationship and one's self as valuable. For example, in therapy, the relationship between the therapist and the client is mutual in the sense that each is related to the other while each one's unique sense of self is also valued and respected. Therefore, the relationship between therapist and client is not equal in power but is mutual from RCT's point of view. Further, Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships also strive toward mutuality rather than equality. RCT emphasizes the importance of mutuality within parent-child relationships. Parents have more power than children. However, regardless of the power differential, they both have power and mutuality recognizes this as important toward forming a mutual relationship. For example, even a little baby's cry overwhelms a highly educated, socially recognized parent. Therefore, recognizing mutuality is a key component when examining the insights from RCT for parent-child relationships.

In order to understand and practice mutuality properly, it is necessary to understand that gender socialization tends to create differences between males and females in regard to empathy. Males often want to get rid of negative feelings, so they tend to take action to change the physical situations in which they find themselves, whereas females often simply want someone to be present and to acknowledge their feelings, so they focus on sharing inner feelings. This gender difference concerning mutuality helps to understand how to show empathy to clients with different genders or personalities. In addition to seeing the general male and female differences in the demonstration of empathy, there are three other factors that typically affect how different genders exhibit empathy. They are: 1) different socialization, 2) early childhood identification, 3) sex role identification. It depends on how a person has internalized these

three factors as to how empathic they are and how they manifest empathy.<sup>159</sup> Therefore, not only in therapy, but also in life, different socialization, early childhood identification, and sex role identification influence one's ability to perceive mutuality and empathy. For example, boys and girls who are raised in a very patriarchal, hierarchal society, and boys and girls who are raised in more equal society, may have different ways of demonstrating of mutuality and empathy. It is implied that Korean Christian parents and Korean Christian immigrant parents may operate with a different understanding of mutuality and empathy with their children.

In addition to gender differences, other blocks to mutuality are as follows: 1) boundary rigidity, where a person is uncomfortable with self-disclosure that might allow another person to have an emotional influence on her/him; 2) narcissism, where a person uses others to feed her/his self esteem and fails to be in empathic, mutual relationships; 3) depression, which blocks mutuality because depression causes one to withdraw to repair and heal; and 4) power dynamics, where one person sees another person as a object over which to use one's power.<sup>160</sup> Understanding the different dynamics of mutuality helps not only the therapist but also Korean Christian immigrant parents to practice mutuality. The concept of RCT's mutuality is helpful in validating one's interdependent self, and the power of another person in relationship. This insight will be helpful for Korean Christian immigrant parents to think about how to relate with their children from a mutual perspective. I will address this issue further in later discussion.

---

<sup>159</sup> Judith V. Jordan et al, "Women and Empathy: Implications for Psychological Development and Psychotherapy," 30-34.

<sup>160</sup> Irene P. Stiver, "The Meanings of 'Dependency' in Female-Male Relationships," in *Women's Growth in Connection*, 143-151.

Hyo. Kye-Hak Lee argues that in the first chapter of *The Analects* and in *The Book of Filial Piety (Hyo Kyeong)* the foundation of a man of virtue is thought to be *Hyo* (filial piety), and this is the primary foundation for accomplishing *In* 仁 (humanity, benevolence, and love).<sup>161</sup> In his time, Mencius claimed that developing a loving heart is natural for parents, and it is natural for children to absorb this loving heart from their parents. Children do not have to learn it because Mencius believed that children were born with it: they come to love and respect their parents and their siblings because of their experience of their parents' loving hearts. Eun-Bong Lee notes that, as many other Confucian scholars also believed, Mencius thought that *Hyo* is the foundation for *In*, 仁 (benevolence) and the virtue of *In* is a given for all parents. Therefore, if one fails to be a filial child, then that is considered immoral, one fails *In* and it is a fundamental failure for humanity.<sup>162</sup>

Eun Sun Lee makes an important point when she draws attention to Confucian culture's sanctification of parents, of adults, rather than children. She observes that respect and validation is given to adults because Confucianism presupposes that adult persons have constantly cultivated their personalities in order to develop *In* and to eventually embrace the wisdom of Heaven.<sup>163</sup> Confucian scholar Tu Weiming notes that "adult" means "a mature person" in Confucianism. The Chinese word for adult, *Seong In*

---

<sup>161</sup> Kye-Hak Lee, "한국인의 전통가정교육사상의 현재적 조명-효와 엄부자모을 중심으로" [A Contemporary Review on Korean Traditional Thoughts on Family-Regarding Hyo and Eom Bu Ja Mo], 한국 아동학회 춘계 학술 발표 [Korean Child Studies Spring Conference Presentation] (1995), 25.

<sup>162</sup> Eun-Bong Lee, "현대 사회에서 효의 실용성에 관련된 몇가지 문제," [The Practicality of Hyo in a Modern Society] *종교연구* [Religious Study] 26 (Spring 2002), 6-8.

<sup>163</sup> Eun Sun Lee, "유교적 자아 실현과 서구 현대 발달 심리학의 교육 철학 [Confucian Self Actualization and Educational Philosophy of Western Modern Developmental Psychology]," in 한국 교육 철학의 새 지평 [A New Horizon for Korean Educational Philosophy] (Incheon: Nailulyununcheck, 2000), 285-324.

(成人), can be translated as, “becoming a person.” Specifically, the meaning of *Seong* is “a process of development.” In other words, in Weiming’s understanding of Confucianism, “adult” means that one does not live according to one’s own needs, but one lives for the sake of developing maturity, through continuously increasing one’s capacity for more growth and maturity.

So, Tu Weiming claims that in Confucianism, there is an expectation of continuous growth in adulthood.<sup>164</sup> Based upon Tu’s explication of the Confucian understanding of adulthood, Eun Sun Lee believes that Koreans’ valuing of elders is not due to the fact that elders have managed to live a certain number of years, but, rather, it is based on perceived maturity. Therefore, Confucianism does not favor adults, particularly the elderly, for simply being old or older than others. Rather, adults who demonstrate maturity in their lives deserve to be valued, and children’s sacrifices on behalf of their elders, as well as children’s sanctification of their elders’ existence, is justified. Lee relates a story from *The Analects* in which Confucius mentions that if a child is not polite, if this child becomes an adult who still does not show any maturity, and if this person does not die early, then this person is a thief. In other words, Confucius criticizes adults who do not grow and mature to become good role models for younger generations.<sup>165</sup>

Eun-Bong Lee states that there are three major influences of *Hyo* on Korean culture.<sup>166</sup> First, it influences family relationships. In most cultures, family is an important social unit, but in Korean culture, the concept of family as a social unit has

---

<sup>164</sup> Tu Weiming, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation; Essays in Confucian Thought* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1979), 40.

<sup>165</sup> Eun Sun Lee, “유교적 자아 실현과 서구 현대 발달 심리학의 교육 철학 [Confucian Self Actualization and Educational Philosophy of Western Modern Developmental Psychology],” 285-324.

<sup>166</sup> Eun-Bong Lee, “현대 사회에서 효의 실용성에 관련된 몇가지 문제 [The Practicality of Hyo in a Modern Society],” 15.



particular significance. This concept of family, *Ga*, as described in Chapter Two, has been validated and sanctioned. It could be compared to the early Christian community's understanding of itself as *ecclesia*. Sanctioned, each family unit could be compared to the early Christian house church. *Hyo* is practiced at national and cosmic levels in the same form that it is practiced in families: individual adults are dutiful to rulers as well as to Heaven. In *The Book of Filial Piety*

*Hyo* is an unchangeable law of Heaven, an eternal law for the earth, and a human obligation, since humans are born between Heaven and earth. Because of humans' place as links between Heaven and earth, their obligation to continue their legacy is important.<sup>167</sup>

Since it is through the male lineage that a family can make this link between Heaven and earth, it is considered undutiful for women not to give birth to sons, even in many Korean families today.<sup>168</sup>

Second, *Hyo* has a religious component. One of the standards for dutiful children is to serve their parents and ancestors after they die. For example, when one prepares for ancestor worship, one has to fast for three days, and make oneself clean in both body and mind. This practice is reminiscent of many religious rites.<sup>169</sup> Therefore, *Hyo* serves to comfort Confucian people and to assuage their anxiety about death. However, this religious component also puts much pressure on having a family legacy, and it thus contributes to the oppression of women by serving as a rationalization of the treatment of women as objects for male dominance in pursuit of a male lineage.

---

<sup>167</sup> Eun-Bong Lee, "현대 사회에서 효의 실용성에 관련된 몇가지 문제[The Practicality of Hyo in a Modern Society]," 16.

<sup>168</sup> In contemporary Korean society, male legacy has been impacted by changes in law. At present, women, including single and divorced mothers, can be considered the legal head of the family.

<sup>169</sup> Eun-Bong Lee, "현대 사회에서 효의 실용성에 관련된 몇가지 문제," [The Practicality of Hyo in a Modern Society], 16.

Third, *Hyo* has been related to social life in general. Traditionally, relatives are generated from marriage relationships, kinship is generated by blood relations, and community is generated by geographical relationships. In most of these relationships, the principle of *Hyo* has been applied. For example, in social systems, teachers are considered the most important people, while the most important people in families are fathers. Parents bring to birth their children's bodies on earth, and teachers birth and cultivate persons' personalities and academic achievements. The high value placed on teachers is due to the fact that Koreans believe that education is the most important source for nurturing people's personalities and helping them become mature persons.

Dialogue between RCT's Mutuality and *Hyo*. First, both mutuality and *Hyo* offer similar views regarding the importance of human interaction for mature relationships and personalities, but their understanding of power dynamics is different. *Hyo* is hierarchical and mutuality is reciprocal (though not equal). The dialogue between these two understandings of power dynamics can enhance and enlighten both, enhancing Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. With *Hyo*, power relations are hierarchal and uni-directional, from the top to the bottom, while the concept of mutuality assumes a bi-directional sharing of power and aims to cultivate power in both parties within the relationship. In terms of parent-child relationships, there is an inevitable relational aspect of hierarchy.

In order to understand nuances of the power dynamics, it is useful to note that there are different kinds of powers. According to John French and Bertran Raven, power can be understood as the relationship between a person and a social agent that is the source of that power. It is rare that we can say with certainty that a given empirical case

of power is limited to one source. Normally, the relation between a social agent and a person will be characterized by several qualitatively different variables which are bases of power. Although there are undoubtedly many possible bases of power that can be distinguished, French and Raven shall here define five which seem especially common and important. These five bases of a social agent's power are: (1) reward power, based on a person's perception that a social agent has the ability to mediate rewards for him; (2) coercive power, based on a person's perception that a social agent has the ability to mediate punishments for him; (3) legitimate power, based on the perception by a person that a social agent has a legitimate right to prescribe behavior for him; (4) referent power, based on a person's identification with a social agent; and (5) expert power, based on the perception that a social agent has some special knowledge or expertness.<sup>170</sup>

From their description of different kinds of powers, Korean parents who have *Hyo* as the basis of their hierarchal relationships may have coercive power, reward power, and legitimate power, and even some expert power. Depending on parents' social status, they could have referent power too. Like these, Korean parents who have resources in their home country have many more opportunities to have different kinds of power even though there is an individual difference. However, contextually, Korean parents may have more possibility to have and maintain these kinds of power. As compared to parents who operate with most of these powers, Korean Christian immigrant parents may have less possibility to exercise and possess these kinds of power. For example, because of their limited social networking and social upward mobility, they might have less possibility for referent power, reward power, or expert power. They still may have

---

<sup>170</sup> John R. P. French, Jr. and Bertran Raven, "The Basis of Social Power," in *Studies in Social Power*, ed. Dorwin Cartwright (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1959), 156-164.

coercive power but the possibility for this is also lowered. Therefore, the possible changes of parental power depend in large part on context. Exercising parental power and authority is challenging in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

Originally, *Hyo* has a foundation for healthy, positive power and authority as a parent. It also can be an example of coercive power. Based upon their trust of adults' maturity and guidance, children can feel safe to depend upon and learn from their parents. If a parent can be aware of his/her healthy positional power, and intend to practice his/power for the benefit of the child, then that will be a positive example of practicing *Hyo* in parent-child relationships. Therefore, this healthy form of parental authority and power needs to be well-maintained and practiced. The Korean culture of *Hyo* can be a beneficial culture for parent-child relationships in the dominant U.S. culture as well. This healthy form of parental authority and power can be also found in the parenting style that Diana Baumrind calls "authoritative parenting style" as compared to "authoritarian parenting style."<sup>171</sup> Baumrind develops a parenting theory addressing how parents control their children and how they show warmth. According to Baumrind, depending on the level of parental control and warmth, there are three different parenting styles. Authoritarian parenting is a parenting style of high parental control and low warmth. Authoritative parenting style is features high control and high warmth. A permissive parenting style entails low control and high warmth.

However, abusive parental power and authority is problematic. If a parent is not properly aware of his/her power, then the culture of *Hyo* can be abusive and unhealthy. The virtue of *Hyo* has been the center of Confucianism and the primary virtue in Korean

---

<sup>171</sup> Diana Baumrind, "Effective Parenting During the Early Adolescent Transition," in *Family Transitions*, ed. P.A. Cowan and E.M. Hetherington (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1991), 111-163.

parent-child relationships. However, *Hyo* is no longer emphasized in modern Korean society or contemporary Korean immigrant contexts. It is no longer being explicitly taught at home, in schools, or in the general society. Usually, even in contemporary Korean culture, parents want their children to be successful in their studies and their social careers. The competitive Korean educational system leads Korean parents to move to the United States to provide better opportunities for their children. Yet, the pressure on children to succeed and fulfill the requirements of *Hyo* continues in the U.S. context or is even exacerbated, because many Korean Christian immigrant parents' goals are centered on supporting their children's education. Thus, Korean Christian immigrant children's experiences of their parents' requests for "absolute obedience" (as illustrated in Chapter Two) seem to be generated from and ingrained in the cultural value of *Hyo*. Therefore, the practice of *Hyo* can be positive in terms of Korean immigrant children's high rates of academic success, but at the same time, it can be an unhealthy use of parental authority and power to instill their goals in their children through expecting children's absolute obedience. The practice of *Hyo* is paradoxical in that it offers both healthy and unhealthy means of wielding power and authority.

Sometimes, this parental authority helps immigrant children's achievement in education, but at the same time, it can be too much pressure for children to bear such parental authority. In examining the practice of *Hyo* and the use of authority, the concept of mutuality may not seem to be applicable because of the importance of hierarchy in Korean Christian parent-child relationships. And it is true that mutuality is a relationship in which hierarchy is not emphasized. It may seem that because of *Hyo*, mutual

relationship cannot be accepted. Indeed, it might appear that mutuality might be a useless concept for connection in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

However, there is another reality also. No matter how absolute the power parents have, parents know and experience how powerful their children are. Children's emotional reactions, or even verbal reactions, to parents are powerful enough to stir up parents' minds and thoughts. It is a part of the challenge of parenting. Therefore, even though there is a positional power on the parents' side, parents know that children also have power. In this regard, if parents and children acknowledge each other's power from a mutual perspective, it might foster their connection. Parents can be honest about how they are affected by their children's behavioral and verbal reactions. If parents want their children to share their honest feelings and minds, children also have to be nurtured and protected toward their mutual participation, mutual sharing, and safe disclosure of their life stories, as well as valued as a mutual part of the family. Healthy hierarchy and mutuality are both necessary, not in terms of subverting parental authority, but in terms of building empathy within Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. The importance of combining the values and characteristics of both healthy hierarchy and mutuality will be addressed later in this chapter through the term Mutual Respect.

However, if there is no healthy parental authority, mutuality might be risky for healthy parent-child relationships. Bonnie Miller-McLemore argues that children are physically and cognitively less developed than most adult parents. Therefore, from this perspective, in most parent-child relationships, parents hope to help their children to grow. Even though there is a high emphasis on family mutuality between parents and children, we can see that differences in power between parents and children are unavoidable. If we

do not acknowledge this difference in parents' and children's power, we risk parentification or a disrespect of parental authority. Therefore, it is important to be mutual in parent-child relationship and at the same time, it is also important not to fall into what Miller-McLemore calls "sloppy mutuality."<sup>172</sup>

Second, mutuality presupposes intersubjectivity, which presupposes self-in-relation; similarly *Hyo* presupposes the family as one unit in one's psyche. In a Korean person's psyche, there is the family as the basic unit of the psyche, and then within the family, there is each family member's psyche. However, Korean Christian immigrant parents and their immigrant children are influenced by different cultural understandings of the self. Parents may operate from a family-unit psychic structure, while the bicultural children, affected by both cultural systems, may function from a psychic structure of individuality and self-reliance. In other words, parents perceive the whole family as a part of their selves and their identities, while children may experience themselves as more differentiated selves with their own subjectivities. This means that when immigrant parents are caring for their children in the same ways that their parents once cared for them, their children may experience this as if their parents think of them as possessions and want only to control them.

These different psychic dynamics need to be addressed when seeking to improve Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. In many Korean immigrant families, as I described in Chapter Two, children report that their parents try to control and possess them as if they are the parents' personal belongings. If Korean Christian

---

<sup>172</sup> Bonnie Miller-McLemore, "Sloppy Mutuality: Just Love for Children and Adults," in *Mutuality Matters: Family, Faith, and Love*, ed. Herbert Anderson et al (Lanham: Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 121-135.

parents and at least older children could understand the differing dynamics of their psychic structures, then children would be able to better understand their parents' loving intentions, and parents would be able to comprehend their children's aims toward being freer, more independent selves. Therefore, for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships, I posit a new concept of "self-in-family." "Self-in-family" refers to situations in which a person is psychically differentiated from the family but remains defined by the family to which he or she belongs. This concept will be addressed further in the discussion of *Jeong* below. Therefore, the intersubjectivity within RCT's mutuality is limited to include the Korean culture of *Hyo*, and the value of family as a basic unit for individuals. Intersubjectivity values self-in-family and acknowledges the unique self of each family member. If the concept of self-in-family can be taken to heart, it will be more possible for Koreans to understand than previously and to experience self and family as much more closely interconnected and intertwined. Therefore, the concept of RCT's intersubjectivity challenges the over-connection common in Korean culture and offers a way of relating that values the self and family together. Metaphorically speaking, in many cases, human connectedness is like a human organ in the body, not like a Lego toy which can easily be added and separated. Messiness and complexity in human interconnection is better represented by "self-in-family," which addresses the complexity of the individual self's unique space among closely tied relationships with the family.

Third, *Hyo* presupposes the importance of serving elders and supports the power of the parents as naturally given. Dialogue with mutuality can bring to awareness the idea that both children and elders are growing and maturing together. Originally, the power invested by *Hyo* was based on a presumption that elders and other powerful people



provided mature leadership and role modeling. However, as time has passed, this original understanding has faded from consciousness. Now, regardless of their maturity, whoever has social power or is older, can exercise power over less socially powerful and younger people. In Korea, parents lacking sufficient maturity can lead and guide their children from the basis of their human, social, and financial capital. However, upon moving to the United States, such parents' human and social capital is often reduced, and financial resources may also be lacking. Therefore, in many immigrant families, differential acculturation occurs in which parents may still be wise but appear less mature than their children. For example, children become better at the new language and are able to navigate the new culture with greater facility than their parents. Parents, who are not familiar with the new language, are often dependent on their children for assistance with mature matters requiring fluency in the language. Thus, parents lose some of the power and authority traditionally allotted to them.

In other words, parents cannot guide their children as they would have done in their home country and are instead guided by their children. This emphasizes the importance of a timeless question: what is the source of parental authority? Is anyone who is a parent naturally given parental authority and power? Eun Sun Lee, feminist Korean Confucian theologian, argues that authority and hierarchy can be understood correctly in contemporary Korean contexts as follows: originally, from a Confucian perspective, authority was given to adults based on their maturity and their serving as role models for younger generations. This was the basic assumption behind the practice of hierarchical relationships, including relationships between parents and children. In other

words, parents who were mature adults and role models for younger generations could validly use their authority over their children and expect respect.

Is there any adult mature enough to always warrant their children's respect? Not just in immigrant society, but in any situation, many parents would say they are not always mature enough to be fully respected by their children. And, immigration worsens the situation. In this regard, immigrant parents and children are learning and growing mature together. It is not a matter of judging immigrant parents' capacity or quality. Human beings are born to be both weak and growing. The expectations of a mature enough adult might be too idealistic in the concept of *Hyo*. Rather, it will be much more realistic and understandable if immigrant adult parents and children are considered to be mutually growing. They are all searching for new words and new relationships. They are somehow equal in terms of finding their way in their new communities and environments. However, Korean Christian immigrant parents who are not used to sharing their struggles with their families frequently come to feel isolated. In Chapter Two's review of the literature on Korean American families, it was found that both immigrant fathers and mothers have their own challenges in adjusting to their new roles in a strange country, while their children are often left to try to survive on their own. So, a lot of literature discusses immigrant parents' increased stresses in terms of parenting. This new reality disempowers Korean Christian immigrant parents' power and authority, if they hold the traditional understanding of power-over relationship.

The concept of mutuality can be used constructively for Korean Christian immigrant families. Parentified children have been unfairly assessed by psychologists as symptomatic of a dysfunctional family. But, a more empowering interpretation of

parentified children and disempowered parents is as “mutual participants in a mutually growing immigrant family.” In different cultures, children can be defined differently. For example, in South Korea, there are less strict legal requirements regarding the supervision of children. So, young children can go to school without parental supervision and stay at home by themselves. This culture might be seen as fostering a lack of protection for children based upon a United States legal perspective. However, it is implied that adult parents respect children’s self-sufficiency and independence to some degree. This culture of self-sufficiency probably originated from family-centered agricultural society. Thus, I am arguing that adult parents can depend on their children without being pathologized. If parents and children are both aware of how they support, depend on, and appreciate each other, this type of relationship can be an example of mutuality. For Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships, this mutuality helps to liberate traditional Korean Christian immigrant parents’ perception of traditional understandings of competence. Rather, they can be relationally competent as defined by RCT as well as by Korean tradition. Rather than pathologizing immigrant family relationships, it is growth-fostering to name their reality as an opportunity for parents and children to develop a healthy form of authority, relational competence, and mutuality. These RCT concepts are most likely foreign to many Korean Christian immigrant families. For the purpose of reclaiming their daily experience as immigrants as growth-fostering experiences toward well-being and healing, aspects of RCT can be employed to empower Korean Christian immigrant families to embrace this reality as an opportunity to develop healthy and culturally competent connection.

Fourth, sexism is a pervasive dimension of Korean families. Expectations for dutifulness from Korean daughters and Korean daughters-in-law are different from the expectations placed on males. As a result of modernization, the preference for male children may be changing in contemporary families. However, there is still no difference in what is expected of daughters. According to Ji Young Kim's research in Korea, daughters-in-law still suffer from having to meet Korean parents-in-law's expectations to be served as they would have been served in the past. *Hyo's* hierarchies of men and women, older and younger, and powerful and powerless lead to similar types of human oppression. Therefore, the sexism of *Hyo* could implicitly influence the relationships between immigrant fathers and mothers in a negative way, and this parental dynamic could influence immigrant children negatively. In fact, social science literature reports that many married Korean women struggle with the burdens of being caretakers and homemakers while also working outside the home. Due to their patriarchal inclinations, fathers still think of themselves as the heads of their families, and they do not want to do "women's work," even if both they and their wives work full time. This causes women more stress, and this stress can negatively influence their children. Therefore, sexism in Korean Christian immigrant families is typically an important issue for Korean Christian immigrant parenting.

This is a dark side of *Hyo* manifested in gender difference. If we want to create gender equality in family relations, this negative side of *Hyo* needs to be re-examined. Likewise, gender difference and inequality is also addressed through RCT's emphasis on mutuality.

This mutuality is based upon mutual empathy. Like any therapeutic modality, the basis of healing is empathy. Moreover, RCT recognizes the mutual aspect of empathy. According to Maureen Walker, mutual empathy happens when both therapist and client take in the cognitive and affective aspects of the other. This is in contrast to the traditional importance placed on the therapist's capacity for empathy.<sup>173</sup> Therefore, empathy is at the heart of mutuality according to RCT.

As I described above, gender differences influence the capacity for empathy in the following ways: 1) different socialization, 2) early childhood identification, 3) sex-role identification.<sup>174</sup> How a person internalizes these three factors impacts how empathic they are and how they manifest empathy. Likewise, depending on one's gender development, the capacity for empathy is also different and the equal relational dynamics may or may not occur. Therefore, the construction of a more empathic personality for both girls and boys is dependent upon gender equality in the family, and such gender equality is highly impacted by *Hyo*. Therefore, the dialogue between mutuality and *Hyo* can bring a more insightful psychological reason for gender equality for Korean family dynamics as well as the possible application of mutuality for better psychological well-being. The sexism that is connected with the concept of *Hyo* can be re-interpreted as a possible resource to create more loving family relationships.

---

<sup>173</sup> Maureen Walker, "How Relationships Heal," in *How Connection Heals: Stories from Relational Cultural Therapy*, ed. Maureen Walker and Wendy B. Rosen (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 3-21.

<sup>174</sup> Judith V. Jordan et al. "Women and Empathy: Implications for Psychological Development and Psychotherapy," 30-34.

### RCT's Vulnerability and Han

In this section, benefits, challenges, and compatibility and incompatibility between the two values, vulnerability and *Han*, will be addressed, and practical suggestions and wisdom for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships will be articulated.

Vulnerability. "Vulnerability" is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as the capacity to be "susceptible to receiving wounds or physical injury; open to attack."<sup>175</sup> This definition carries the notion of not being protected, of being unsafe.<sup>176</sup> Jordan points out that this definition of vulnerability is based in part on Western psychology's notion of a separate self and implies that vulnerability is avoidable. In contrast, RCT's focus on the relationality of the self with others emphasizes that vulnerability is not only inevitable because we are interrelated but also necessary as a part of connection and growth in relationship. In terms of relationship, the sense of self presupposes open and connected relationships with other selves. It means relating is inevitable and, therefore, the experience of one's vulnerability is also inevitable. So, caring for and understanding one's vulnerability is one way of healing one's wounds that have been inflicted as a result of being vulnerable in society.

Within the framework of RCT, a therapist's sharing of her/his vulnerability is not seen as a sign of weakness but as a resource for therapeutic rapport. Through this rapport, the client feels a connection with the therapist as a mutually vulnerable human being, which serves as part of the normalization process that allows the client to see her/his own

---

<sup>175</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "vulnerability."

<sup>176</sup> Judith V. Jordan, *Valuing Vulnerability: New Definitions of Courage*, Work in Progress (Stone Center for Developmental Series and Studies), no. 102 (Wellesley, Mass.: Stone Center, Wellesley Center for Women, Wellesley College, 2003), 1-13.

real vulnerabilities and wounds. However, it is also important for the therapist to pay special attention to when and where the sharing of vulnerability will be helpful to the client, and to thus make therapeutically appropriate decisions about how and when to reveal her/his vulnerability to the client. This sharing validates both the client and the therapist as powerful people, who are vulnerable as human beings, and it opens the possibility of seeing the therapeutic relationship as a mutually influencing process. This notion of vulnerability is actually challenging for real-life dynamics of relationship. Often in parent-child dynamics, parents and children may try to connect and end up hurting each other whether they intend to or not. Therefore, RCT's definition of vulnerability needs to be carefully understood when applied to real parent-child dynamics. RCT's therapeutic setting involves an ideal situation to practice true vulnerability; but in real life, skilled and seasoned parents can also hurt their children, and this hurt cannot be easily processed as in a therapy session.

Judith V. Jordan asserts that it takes real courage to be vulnerable.<sup>177</sup> In many cases, human relationality, with its multiple relationships and connections, requires us to take multiple risks in order to be vulnerable with each other. Therefore, it takes courage to be vulnerable. In Korean culture, great courage is needed in order to be vulnerable because it is countercultural in so many ways. Here is an example. Koreans' traditional sense of competence communicates that we are not supposed to share what we feel, as it renders us weak, susceptible to injury, and causes shame. Parents are not encouraged in Korean culture to share their vulnerability, as they would then be failing to protect their children. Therefore, while I agree with the importance of vulnerability according to

---

<sup>177</sup> Judith V. Jordan, *Valuing Vulnerability: New Definitions of Courage*, 1-13.

RCT's therapeutic modality, it is not relevant or applicable to all therapeutic relationships or parent-child relationships. Attention to the definition of *Han*, and a dialogue between vulnerability and *Han* will help us identify a culturally more appropriate view of the values of vulnerability.

*Han*. Minjung theologian Nam-Dong Suh defines *Han* as a lump in one's spirit.<sup>178</sup>

This basic definition of *Han* gives the sense that it is a Korean expression of pain, suffering, and woundedness. This lump in one's spirit may be a universal experience. Jae-Hoon Lee defines *Han* as, in part, the repressed sexual libido described by Freud. Kyu-tae Lee claims that Korean legends and myths have stories of "*mongdang-ghuishin*," (bachelor-ghosts) and "*songaksi*" (maiden-ghosts) whose sexual libido cannot be expressed. So, literature describes these spirits' repression of sexual libido, due to societal morality, as *Han*.<sup>179</sup>

Jae-Hoon Lee also defines *Han* as a Korean psychological "complex," which is a Jungian term. From his study of two pioneering Korean psychoanalysts, Bou-young Rhie and Kwang-il Kim, Lee finds that *Han* is described in psychological works as unlived life, a negative mother complex, the split-off part of the ego, and a split infantile mother image. In his article, "Illness and Healing in the Three Kingdom Period: A Symbolical Interpretation," Rhie points out that, in Korean traditional belief, *Han* is considered the primary cause of disease.<sup>180</sup>

---

<sup>178</sup> Nam-Dong Suh, *Minjung Theology*, ed. Kim Yong Bock (Singapore: The Commission on Theological Concerns, 1981), 60. Cited by Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of The Inner Wounds-Han* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 139.

<sup>179</sup> Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of The Inner Wounds-Han*, 11-12.

<sup>180</sup> Bou-young Rhie, "Illness and Healing in the Three Kingdoms Period," *Korea Journal* (December, 1981), 7. Cited by Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of The Inner Wounds-Han*, 16. Kwang-il Kim, "Psychoanalysis of Sinbyung," *Psychoanalysis of the Korean Traditional Culture* (Seoul: Siensa, 1984), 205. Cited by Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of The Inner Wounds-Han*, 19.



Yul-Kyu Kim claims that *Han* is related to death. This is exemplified by the following common expressions: “Because of *Han*, I cannot close my eyes at my death,” and “I cannot live my life because of my *Han*.” Sometimes, *Han* blames others, so revenge is sought and it produces innocent victims. This becomes an unhealthy cycle, is a negative aspect of *Han*, and is referred to as “the dark transference of *Han*.”<sup>181</sup> However, the positive aspect of *Han* can be sublimated into an achievement of personal decision-making.<sup>182</sup> Yul-Kyu Kim also claims that *Han* is a personal and collective experience of the Korean people that has been inherited from past generations. *Han* is inherited from previous generations that have been subjected to repeated foreign invasions, political oppression by a powerful elite, and interpersonal conflicts among family members in extended family systems.<sup>183</sup> While a negative influence results from collective *Han*, at the same time, collective *Han* can also generate power for both bad and good. When *Han* becomes collective, it can be a source of energy for the achievement of social justice or injustice.

In the use of *Han* in shamanism, *Han* is understood as a deep wound and a frustrated wish for eternity. Shamanism uses the terms, *Jeong-Han* (feminine *Han*), and *Won-Han* (original masculine *Han*, which is the result of repeated historical experiences of defeat, subjugation, and humiliation).<sup>184</sup> Nam-Dong Suh suggests that Korean people have a “fourfold *Han*”:

---

<sup>181</sup> Yul-kyu Kim, *The Ore of Han and The Stream of Won*, (Seoul: Joowoo, 1981), 15. Cited by Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of The Inner Wound-Han*, 12.

<sup>182</sup> Yul kyu Kim, *The Ore of Han and The Stream of Won*, 21, 28. Cited by Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of The Inner Wound-Han*, 12.

<sup>183</sup> Yul kyu Kim, *The Ore of Han and The Stream of Won*, 13. Cited by Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of The Inner Wounds-Han*, 13.

<sup>184</sup> Eun Ko, “Introspection on Han,” in *The Voice of My Wave* (Seoul: Nanam, 1987), 375-407, Cited by Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of The Inner Wounds-Han*, 15-16.

1. Koreans have suffered numerous invasions by surrounding powerful nations so that the very existence of the Korean nation has come to [be] understood as *Han*.
2. Koreans have continually suffered from tyranny of the rulers so that they think of their existence as “*backsung* (grass root people under Korean class system in ancient Korea).”<sup>185</sup>
3. Under Confucianism’s strict imposition of laws and customs discriminating against women, the existence of women is *Han* itself.
4. At a certain point in Korean history, about half of the population was registered as hereditary slaves, and were treated as property rather than as people of the nation. These thought of their lives as *Han*.<sup>186</sup>

Koreans’ fourfold *Han* has been experienced in Koreans’ lives both at an individual and a collective level. Youngshin Park and Euichul Kim have created a chart that shows Korean people’s generational differences in terms of the experience of *Han*.<sup>187</sup> This chart depicts the important connections between social change, history, and people’s development. For example, those Koreans who are now in their sixties and seventies experienced Japanese colonization and national independence when they were children (1936-1948). When they were adolescents, they experienced the Korean War (1950-1953). When they were in young adulthood, they experienced the 4/19 political revolution (1960), the 5/16 political upheaval (1961), the Vietnam War (1965), and the birth of a dictatorship (1972-1978). In their older adult years, they saw: the assassination of the dictator president Cheunghee Park (1980); the Kwangju student demonstration that caused thousands of innocent deaths of students as well as citizens at the hand of another dictator president, Doowhan Chun (1980); Chun’s dictatorship (1980-1988); and the

---

<sup>185</sup> *Backsung* refers to grassroot people within the Korean class system.

<sup>186</sup> The fourth point describes the Korean people’s *Han* when they were registered as hereditary slaves. Nam-Dong Suh does not indicate the particular period of Korean history to which this refers. However, there have been numerous invasions from China and Japan throughout Korean history during which this practice could have been instituted. Nam-Dong Suh, *Minjung Theology*, 54. Cited by Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of The Inner Wounds-Han*, 141.

<sup>187</sup> Youngshin Park, and Euichul Kim, 한국의 청소년 문화와 부모자녀 관계-토착심리탐구 [Korean Adolescent Culture and Korean Parent-Child Relationship], 65.

reign of a democratic president (1993-2003). Thus, within the sixty-plus years of these persons' lives, they have had to deal with quite a few challenging situations that have caused lumps in most Korean people's spirits. I wonder, with so many tumultuous experiences in their history, how have these elders handled their subjective and objective feelings and experiences of *Han* in their lives? As grandmothers, grandfathers, mothers, and fathers, how do they deal with their own individual and collective levels of *Han* in their personal and social lives? How do they manage their sense of *Han* in terms of their relationships? More specifically, in the context of their family relationships, how do they deal with unresolved emotions such as despair, alienation, and anger that they may have as a result of experiences of oppression? When they were caring for vulnerable children, what did they do with their own emotions and feelings of vulnerability? Furthermore, how has Korea as a whole, in its culture and its collective psyche, managed this very painful and historical *Han*-psyche and personality? This legacy of *Han* continues to exist in Korea and in Korean Christian immigrant communities in one way or another.

Dialogue with RCT's Vulnerability and *Han*. Lee's exploration of the Korean cultural concept of *Han* provides a broad understanding of this idea. This is helpful for understanding the place of *Han* in Korean Christian immigrant parenting. Korean Christian parents, who go through the challenging adjustment process of immigration, experience painful lumps in their spirits, i.e., individual and collective *Han* derived from oppression and social marginalization. However, the Korean psychological complex of the *Han*-psyche and personality exacerbates their *Han*. A majority of Korean Christian immigrant parents left their country for the sake of their children. They want to be better parents, or they want to resolve their own *Han* that has developed from educational

oppression and a sense of being of little importance as people from a small country (thus they want to provide their children better opportunities for becoming global leaders). Whether Korean Christian immigrant parents truly love and care for their children or whether they are using them as objects for their own *Han-pu-ri* (resolution of *Han*), these parents' main reason for coming to the United States is their children.

However, as described in Chapter Two, Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships suffer from disconnection. I see disconnection as one of the greatest sufferings for both Korean Christian immigrant parents and their children—this disconnection causes "lumps in the spirits" of parents and children and, therefore, I would call it *Han*. Korean Christian immigrant parents may have *Han* in their lives in the United States. They may have lost their voices, community, status, networks, and dignity that had been strong in their home country. They are travelers, pilgrims, sojourners, and in-between persons in their spirits and their lives. A sense of marginalization, isolation, and disconnection from the mainstream United States culture as well as from their own children may be a challenge and a source of despair. Therefore, dealing with the Korean psychological complex of *Han* is important for creating culturally competent Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Dialogue between *Han* and RCT's concept of vulnerability might shed light on Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Below is what emerges from the dialogue between these two.

First, *Han* and vulnerability should be understood as inevitable aspects of human reality. Yet these two concepts have been perceived as sources of pathology or weakness, rather than as starting points with transformative healing power. RCT's view of vulnerability suggests that Korean Christian immigrant parents can have healthier

connections with themselves, their children, and their communities if they seek experiences that will help heal *Han*. The immigration process adds complexity and suffering to their lives, and Korean Christian immigrant parents have a lot of painful stories to tell. It is costly to their families that these parents often do not find spaces where they feel comfortable to release the stories that carry their pain and suffering.

Placing these parents under a certain clinical diagnosis would put them in a more vulnerable position than the one they already have as minority immigrant parents. In this regard, framing their experiences in terms of the Korean concept of *Han* and encouraging them to share their “stories of *Han*” can provide a culturally appropriate framework for understanding their experiences and normalizing them. Normalizing their suffering through naming it *Han* can actually bring to their consciousness ideas of national healing, communal healing, and eventually, individual healing. If they begin by sharing stories of their experiences of colonization, the Korean War, and political dictatorship, then they may become more able to share stories of their life in the United States. Thus, the sharing of stories about common national experiences can lead into the sharing of individual pain and dynamics in their personal relationships.

Korean immigrant parents tend not to want to share their stories for the purpose of therapy; seeking professional mental health services still is not popular in Korean culture, and it still carries a stigma. Also, parents’ protection of their children can be a reason not to share their vulnerable stories with their children. An additional reason parents are reluctant to tell their own vulnerable stories is to protect their social face from

their children.<sup>188</sup> Because of the need to save face and their hesitation to seek mental health care, Korean Christian immigrant parents may not be able to see the value of sharing their vulnerable stories from RCT's perspective. From RCT's perspective, vulnerability—for example, in the form of parents' honest openness—can create a connection among family members. As Lawrence E. Shapiro puts it, family honesty has to be an ongoing family topic and value for family intimacy and closeness.<sup>189</sup>

However, they will share their *Han*-ridden stories as immigrant parents in a new country if they are invited to share their stories of *Han*. When they are invited to share their *Han* as pathology, it will be a shameful experience. If they are invited to share their immigration-related stories, they will be open to sharing. For example, I have led a workshop called “beautiful relationship—self recovery” for six years with mostly first-generation Korean Christian immigrants. Once I frame the pain and *Han* of immigration as a normal experience for most Korean Christian immigrants, they have less hesitation to share their stories in a group or in pairs. As a facilitator, I have been leading and listening to their stories as first-generation immigrants. There are hesitations and resistance sometimes. Soon, they realize their pain in association with immigration can be easily found in another person's stories. Most people's personal stories about the challenges of immigration also include the personal pain associated with Korean modern history. Therefore, the story I shared about my own family and my father's mixture of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* is not an uncommon story. It is easily identified in my congregational experiences when listening to the stories of many first-generation immigrants. In this

---

<sup>188</sup> Linda Lantieri, *Building Emotional Intelligence: Techniques to Cultivate Inner Strength of Children* (Boulder, Colo.: Sounds True, 2008), 2-3.

<sup>189</sup> Lawrence E. Shapiro, *How to Raise a Child with a High EQ: A Parents' Guide to Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1997), 62-64.

regard, naming their pain and suffering as *Han* seems to be practically and clinically useful.

Using RCT's understanding of vulnerability can encourage Korean Christian immigrant parents to think of their experiences of pain and suffering as potential foundations upon which to connect with themselves and with their children.<sup>190</sup> Judith Jordan defines vulnerability as a capacity to connect with others, which is not a sign of weakness. If parents can share their stories of *Han* not from a pathological frame of reference, but from a cultural frame of reference, it will bring more connection, and it will eventually bring more healing within themselves and with others. Therefore, the concept of *Han* can be interpreted as an inevitable human reality and a sign of shared human "vulnerability," and it can be used as a frame of reference from which to access parents' stories of *Han* that can eventually bring to surface their insights for national, communal, and individual healing—and for the healing of their relationships with their children.

Even though there are some positive values in RCT's vulnerability, it is still challenging to address it as a positive value for Korean Christian immigrant families. I agree with the value of vulnerability to transform their suffering experiences like *Han* and as a way to grow and heal. However, it remains a challenge in practical ways for Korean Christian immigrant families to accept it as a positive and adaptable concept.

Also, as Jordan said, to be vulnerable people need to employ courage. Where does this courage come from? While I want to invite the value of *Han*, and vulnerability's transformative power and healing, I still question what motivates people to transform

---

<sup>190</sup> Judith V. Jordan, *Valuing Vulnerability: New Definition of Courage*, 1-13.

their shame and to expose their personal pain and collective pain toward healing and growing. One of my answers and hopes for Korean Christian immigrant's transformation of their vulnerability is through their Christian spirituality. One such spiritual practice is "*Tongseong Gido*,"<sup>191</sup> which is commonly practiced in Korean worship services. Through this simultaneous verbal participation in public, communal prayer, Korean Christian immigrants can share their painful stories with God, the community, and with themselves. They can share their daily stresses, pains, *Han*, and vulnerability to vent, let it out, and eventually build a sacred connection with God. Through this vulnerable Korean public spirituality, Korean congregations can develop an intimate, personal connection with God. If a preacher or pastor is aware of the pain, *Han*, and vulnerability that Korean Christian immigrant families face on a daily basis, she can then name their pain and *Han*; the pastor can challenge them toward openness by inviting them to expose their *Han* to God so that they can experience the power of sharing and its resulting divine intimacy. Sometimes, *Tongseong Gido* itself is challenging for people who are not comfortable with opening and sharing their voices. In order to respect this group of people, silent prayer also needs to be allowed.

Second, *Han* and vulnerability relate to how one understands one's self. If one sees the self as a closed, separate unit, then protection from external dangers is paramount. However, RCT and Korean values suggest that the self is a connected and cultural self. With this emphasis, vulnerability can be understood not as a dangerous weakness, but as

---

<sup>191</sup> Most Korean Protestant churches invite worshippers to participate in *Tongseong Gido*, a form of communal public prayer in which all worshippers pray aloud simultaneously, resulting in a period of loud and shared praying.



a normal and necessary aspect of human reality and relatedness. It takes courage to acknowledge and express what has been commonly understood as a sign of weakness.

Traditionally, Korean people have thought of the family as one unit that is closed and separate in the sense that family honor has to be defended and protected. Korean families are communal and open to supporting other families, but they will not share their vulnerabilities. In order to protect their family's honor, family members have to keep potentially shameful issues secret. They are afraid of dishonoring their families by revealing family secrets, and they do not want to be blamed for such a breach of family privacy. In the same way that the relational-cultural understanding of the self transforms the traditional Western concept of the self, understanding of Korean Christian immigrant family's vulnerability and *Han* can come across through their understanding of different self and family. Likewise sharing about their family pain can bring an individual and familial shame. Therefore, psychoeducational programs are important. In addition to Korean Church's common practice of *Tongseong Gido*, psychoeducational programs that explain the importance of sharing are imperative. For example, it is important to educate about both the role of face in Korean culture and the importance of sharing one's "lump" and vulnerability with another person, for the sake of healing. Through psychoeducation, slow but constructive change toward cognitive and affective changes will be fostered, both at a personal and a communal level. If a community leader, pastor, pastoral counselor, or preacher is willing to offer education about such components in Korean Christian church settings, it will be a useful way to educate the congregation. From preaching, workshops, and retreats, this message can be repeated as a means of continued learning.

Third, RCT's concept of vulnerability shifts away from the traditional emphasis on the therapist's expertise over clients' pathology. In other words, traditionally, therapists are supposed to fix clients' problems, but RCT values the mutuality of the therapist and the client, so therapists see their role as one of seeking to empower clients. If Korean Christian immigrant parents apply this insight, then they can allow themselves to be vulnerable in RCT's way. Parents do not have to be experts in everything. Rather, they can share their limitations along with their strengths. In this regard, parents' courage in sharing their weaknesses can be valued as strength and transform their relationships with their children.

Too often, children are objectified by their parents' weaknesses and projections. In the Korean context, they might be used as objects of *Han-pu-ri*, i.e., objects through which parents seek to resolve their *Han*. For example, if parents are not educated, they may project their regrets over a lack of education into a goal for their children to be well-educated. If parents are not materialistically successful, they may push their children to be materialistically successful. Dynamics such as these are commonly found in Korean Christian immigrant parenting. Since their immigrant experiences are so painful, Korean parents desire social and economic success for their children. Therefore, most Korean parents want their children to become well-paid professionals, like lawyers, doctors, or engineers, and they do not listen to what their children desire for their lives. Parents' vulnerabilities thus become expressed in the dynamic of *Han-pu-ri*. *Han* has the energy to change life. However, unhealthy release of parents' *Han*-ridden energy can distort children's own desires for their future. Eventually, this distorts the parent-child relationship and prevents it from being a growth-fostering relationship. If the *Han*-ridden

energy can be transformed into a positive event, it will be a transforming energy and source of power.

### RCT's Authenticity and *Jeong*

In this section, benefits, challenges, and compatibility and incompatibility between the two values, authenticity and *Jeong*, will be addressed, and practical suggestions and wisdom for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships will be articulated.

Authenticity. Authenticity is the increasing capacity to present oneself more fully in relationship.<sup>192</sup> This includes one's "respect for the complexity of each person, acknowledges the importance of embodied difference, and invites expression of that difference in relationship."<sup>193</sup> Authenticity is a crucial element in Relational Cultural Theory and its valuing of connection. If one is not authentic, this impacts the potential for human connection.

Authenticity needs to be distinguished from unnecessary or reactive disclosure of one's self. It does not mean that one can be honest every time there is a request. If one's honesty increases another person's shame, entrapment, and disconnection, then that is not the kind of authenticity referred to in RCT. Rather, RCT's authenticity demands careful timing, capacity, and reason. The therapist must make a careful and thoughtful decision to think about appropriate timing, purpose, and what kind of information might be helpful for the client's growth.

The more important element in authenticity is not only careful and thoughtful disclosure but quality of presence and availability in relationship. Thus, empathic

---

<sup>192</sup> Maureen Walker, "How Relationships Heal," 11.

<sup>193</sup> Maureen Walker, "How Relationships Heal," 11.

attunement and relational accountability are crucial for authentic connection.<sup>194</sup> In order to create an authentic connection, RCT opposes the neutrality, nondisclosure, and non-responsiveness advocated by some schools of psychotherapy. Authenticity is a quality of presence where a therapist shares genuine feelings and responses. However, if a therapist does not embody the quality of relational responsiveness, she/he could easily fall into reactivity. Relational responsiveness is different from reactivity. Relational responsiveness is a therapeutic responsiveness to help the client to take steps out of disconnection and toward healing connection. Conversely, reactivity is impulsive, entirely spontaneous, based on the internal experience of oneself.<sup>195</sup> Thus, therapists validate their authenticity by maintaining a responsive, rather than a reactive, quality of presence in therapy. Authenticity is important for human relationship, and it also can be important in parent-child relationships. What values and insights are available from RCT's concept of authenticity for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships? Before answering this question, let me continue by defining *Jeong*, prior to beginning a dialogue between authenticity and *Jeong* and its implications for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

*Jeong*. The Korean social psychologist Sang-Chin Choi has developed a Korean cultural psychology in which he defines *Jeong* as an emotional bond or tie between people that includes both positive and negative aspects.<sup>196</sup> So, this word includes feelings of love and hate or feelings in-between. For example, in Korean relational expressions, there are many words that have *Jeong* in them, including *In Jeong* (human heart), *Mo*

---

<sup>194</sup> Maureen Walker, "How Relationships Heal," 12.

<sup>195</sup> Jean Baker Miller et al., "Therapists' Authenticity," 64-65.

<sup>196</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, *한국인 심리학* [Korean Psychology], (Seoul: Jung Ang University Press, 2007), 42-75.

*Jeong* (mother's heart), and *Bu Jeong* (father's heart). Similar words for son's heart or daughter's heart include *Hyo Ja* (filial son) or *Hyo Nyo* (filial daughter). Therefore, the culture shows how parents' and children's ways of love and respect are different even in the language.

These words signify the love and positive emotions people have in their relationships. However, there are also expressions like *Miun Jeong* (hating heart) and *Goun Jeong* (loving heart) that connote the holding of contradictory emotions at the same time. In addition, people often state their *Jeong* for entities like their old houses and personal belongings, such as clothing, purses, and computers.<sup>197</sup> In Korean culture, *Jeong* has been used to convey Koreans' sense of emotional connection. Therefore, as Yul-Kyu Kim and Kyu-Tae Lee point out, *Jeong* has been one characteristic that foreigners have described as representative of Korean culture.<sup>198</sup>

However, according to Sang-Chin Choi, there is little research about the phenomenon or conceptualization of *Jeong*. Scholars in Korean literature and anthropology such as Yul-Kyu Kim, and in social psychology including Joo-Hee Kim, Tae-Rim Yoon, Kyu-Tae Lee, U-Ryung Lee, Hung-Woo Lee, and Soo-Won Lee, have attempted to describe the phenomenon of *Jeong*. However, these authors do not specifically conceptualize what *Jeong* is.<sup>199</sup> Yet, the Korean tradition of *Jeong* is an important concept for Korean Christian immigrant parenting, because *Jeong* is parents'

---

<sup>197</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology], 45-46.

<sup>198</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology], 42.

<sup>199</sup> Yul-Kyu Kim, 한국인 우리들은 누구인가 (서울: 자유문학사, 1986), 149-163; Joo-Hee Kim, 품앗이와 정의 인간관계 (서울: 집문당, 1988), 69-87; Tae-Rim Yoon, 한국인 (서울: 현암사, 1970), 234-246; Kyu-Tae Lee, 한국인의 의식구조 (서울: 문리사, 1977), 174-190; U-Ryung Lee, 신한국인 (서울: 문학사상사, 1986), 183-200; 이홍우 et al., 한국적 사고의 원형 (서울: 정신문화연구원, 1988), 50-59; Soo-won Lee, 한국인의 인간관계의 정 공간, 개인주의와 집단주의; 동서양 심리학의 만남. 국제 학술 회의: 서울. Cited by Sang-Chin Choi, 42-43.

intimacy with their child in Korean parent-child relationships. So, without a deep psychological and cultural understanding of *Jeong*, establishing theory and practice for Korean Christian immigrant parenting would miss the mark.

The concept of *Jeong* represents Korean parents' emotions for their children, but there is no Western theory to guide us in understanding these emotions that Korean Christian immigrant parents have for their children. Partly this is because a Korean sense of *Jeong* is always mixed with the tradition of *Hyo*. Likewise, there is a deep connection between *Hyo* and *Jeong* when Koreans talk about intimacy within parent-child relationships, as shown in the expression of *Mo Jeong* (mother's heart) and *Hyo Nyo* (filial daughter).

*Jeong* has a long history of use in Korean literature. Even during the Koryo and Yi dynasties, *Jeong* was a concept that appeared in Korean literature. Kyu-Bo Lee used an expression of *Jeong* as a relational bond between a man and woman.<sup>200</sup> In the folktale, "Shim Cheong," the father of Shim Cheong grieves and expresses his mixed feelings—*Jeong*—about his relational bond with his girlfriend, described as a "bitch," who spent all the money that Shim Cheong gave him from her sacrifice.<sup>201</sup> In the story, when Shim Cheong left the palace of the god of the ocean, she expressed her *Jeong* to her female servant as a way of showing her appreciation for and attachment with her.

Likewise, from ancient times to the present, *Jeong* has been used in ordinary relationships. A typical expression used by couples is, "Because of *Jeong*, we live as a couple." This expression includes the ambivalence and complexity of emotions that is implied in the one word, *Jeong*, which has been used to describe diverse relationships,

---

<sup>200</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology], 42.

<sup>201</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology], 43.

from parent-child relationships, relationships between spouses, collegial relationships, and hierarchical working relationships.<sup>202</sup> In these contexts, it is common for Korean people to use the word *Jeong*, instead of *Sarang* (love).

Sang-Chin Choi analyzes why *Jeong* has been so popularly used in Korean relationships. Choi posits two main reasons: 1) psychologically speaking, Koreans tend to be empathic with other people, so they tend to show their love, heart, and support with the word, *Jeong*; and 2) Korean parent-child relationships have a unique nature. They are empathic, undifferentiated, relational, and identical, which is different from being rational, independent, and differentiated, as favored in Western culture.<sup>203</sup> I cannot totally agree with Sang-Chin Choi's rationale for Korean people's use of *Jeong* as it seems to be an overgeneralization about Korean people. It is hard to generalize that all Korean people have empathic natures and relational patterns. However, I also understand the overgeneralization of Korean people's tendencies regarding empathy and relational patterns not from the perspective of academic research but from my life as a ordinary Korean person: initially, I do not even recognize Choi's rationale of *Jeong* to be an overgeneralization because it is so familiar to me and is commonly communicated through Korean media, education, and culture.

Sang-Chin Choi and Seung-Yup Yoo claim that Korean parent-child relationships with the former characteristics are established through *Jeong*. Therefore, since *Hyo* is extended from Korean parent-child relationships to sibling relationships, friendships, collegial relationships, and other relationships, it can be assumed that parents' *Jeong* naturally affects children in such a way that *Jeong* becomes a part of their personalities.

---

<sup>202</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology], 45.

<sup>203</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology], 48.

So, it could be implied that *Hyo* and *Jeong* become ingrained psychological and cultural traits for Korean people.<sup>204</sup>

Sang-Chin Choi defines *Jeong* as having two dimensions, personality traits and feelings toward other objects. These two dimensions coexist. For example, one has *Jeong* as a personality trait and one shows one's *Jeong* for another person or an object. Choi used qualitative and quantitative surveys with Korean young adults to find out how they experience and understand *Jeong*. From this research, he hypothesized that *Jeong* has a psychological structure and four conditions for its development. First, Choi asked the young adults what their associations with *Jeong* were, and then he categorized these associations into the following: 1) historicity (length of time spent with another person); 2) togetherness (degree to which they shared their lives); 3) warmth (how they showed their empathy); and 4) closeness (the amount of tolerance they had for the other person's mistakes).<sup>205</sup>

Choi also proposes the following topology of *Jeong*: Time (Historicity), Relation (Closeness, Shared Experience), Space (Togetherness), and Personality (Empathy, Understanding, and Honesty). These four elements are four basic structures that are interdependent and overlapping. *Jeong* can be created through any one of these four categories, but just one category will not be sufficient to describe the fullness of the nature of *Jeong*.<sup>206</sup> These four categories are fluid, interdependent, and support one another to create *Jeong*.<sup>207</sup>

---

<sup>204</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology], 49.

<sup>205</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology], 49-52.

<sup>206</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology], 51.

<sup>207</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology], 52.



In addition to constructing the four categories of *Jeong*, Choi also addressed the following questions in his research: 1) What types of people do you think have *Jeong*? 2) What types of people do you think do not feel any *Jeong*? Interestingly, the young adults answered that people who can feel *Jeong* demonstrate altruism, vulnerability, and interest in others, while people who don't feel *Jeong* have no interest in others' pain, they are selfish, apathetic, independent, and perfectionistic, and they have intellectual strength.<sup>208</sup> Choi concluded that Korean people value emotional support for other people. Therefore, this research demonstrates that Korean people tend to positively prioritize *Jeong*-centered, non-rational, and human-centered relational structures.<sup>209</sup>

It is interesting to note Choi's findings regarding the characteristics of people who do not feel *Jeong*. According to the young adults in his study, Korean people do not feel *Jeong* from people who are intellectual and non-emotional. Generally speaking, people feel *Jeong* from altruistic people, not people who seem selfish. While Western cultures value independence as a trait of healthy persons, Koreans felt that people with independent natures tend not to feel *Jeong*. Perfectionism does not necessarily hurt other people, but many of the Koreans who were surveyed felt that perfectionists were "inhuman." This reveals something unique about the Korean tradition of *Jeong*: it favors relationship rather than being competent on one's own. In other words, if a person is individually competent, does not show any vulnerability, and is a perfectionist, then this person would be considered "inhuman" and would not be supported with other people's *Jeong*.

---

<sup>208</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology], 52, 62.

<sup>209</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology], 59.

Historicity, togetherness, closeness, and empathy can create *Jeong* connections. Once a person develops *Jeong*, then this person can be an in-group person. However, if a person in the group does not develop *Jeong*, then this person is treated as an “other,” as a person who does not share *Jeong* with the rest of the group. Korean people tend to share *Jeong* to create their own communities, which are described as the “We Culture.” If a person develops relationships with *Jeong*, then this person can be considered an in-group person, that is, they are like a family member. Thus, they become a part of “we-ness” or “our side.” As a result, “we-ness” fosters a community spirit to support each other and they become like a family. It is a strength that can be developed from a culture of *Jeong*.

However, as a result, there is also a negative component. If the person does not belong to the culture of “we-ness,” the person may have the experience of being outcast or even oppressed. The culture of we-ness can serve to reinforce unhealthy, group-oriented power against individuals who have views in opposition to those of the collective. Therefore the culture of *Jeong* can be a foundation for unhealthy group culture or power against helpless individuals.

Dialogue with Authenticity and *Jeong*. First, *Jeong* is crucial for Korean people’s relationships, and authenticity is crucial for human relationships, according to RCT. However, each concept challenges the other. *Jeong* is a slow, emotionally-based, sometimes irrationally-based relationship, much like a foggy rain. However, authenticity is like a controlled water system for well-controlled garden. Therefore, a RCT’s therapist’s authenticity is a well-controlled weather system so that the client or person feels comfortable with the openness of the relationship. *Jeong* is not like that. *Jeong* is not a well-controlled water system. The first time *Jeong* occurs, both people may not

know that their environment is wet at all. However, over time, two people experience the wetness of the weather and then later realize the resulting love and hate they harbor toward each other. Therefore, both concepts are defined as crucial elements for human relationships, but the way the two are expressed is radically different. The similarity between the two is sharing emotions, whether that is positive or negative. Since *Jeong*-centeredness is inherent in parent-child relationships, RCT's authenticity may challenge this concept of *Jeong*. Because *Jeong* develops in a slow and ambiguous manner, immigrant children are often unaware of its presence. Children in most Korean Christian immigrant families are unaware of the slow, ubiquitous way that parents address emotions. Thus, they find themselves confused and having to guess what the weather is like.

However, authenticity is a well-controlled temperament system. It is precise and targets the needs of people in this controlled system. However, RCT's sense of authenticity is a challenging concept for people who are not trained. As I said earlier, Korean Christian immigrant families face immigration-related challenges on a daily basis. Therefore, they experience stress, pain, and *Han* as their vulnerability. In the midst of this challenging reality, developing and practicing RCT's concept of authenticity might not be realistic for Korean Christian immigrant parents. For a trained therapist, it is a well-developed concept and practice. But, expecting this from Korean Christian immigrant parents, or any common parent, might be too idealistic. Therefore, both *Jeong* and authenticity are crucial elements for the connection of Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships, but both are challenging to apply in order to foster a constructive parent-child connection. Rather, supporting each concept can be useful

toward thinking about a more authentic approach in terms of genuine feelings for each other and relational attunement for the precise sharing of one's story as a healthy exposure. Also, *Jeong*'s valuing of the history and steadiness of relationship, togetherness in terms of shared presence, and the recognition of the complex and paradoxical emotions and relationships in connection can all help to foster the connection. The complementarity of these two terms helps to make a more culturally attuned connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

Second, *Jeong*-centered and authenticity-centered relationships are associated with RCT's concept of relational responsiveness and reactivity. Both authenticity and *Jeong* could include relational responsiveness and reactivity. RCT warns about the danger of relational reactivity which is impulsive and spontaneous and based upon the internal experience of oneself.<sup>210</sup> Therefore, RCT's authenticity is based on relational responsiveness which is a therapist's intentional therapeutic approach for the client's transformation from disconnection toward connection. Relational responsiveness is a sought-after characteristic for any person who yearns for authentic connection. However, this capacity to be relationally responsive is such a challenge, even for trained RCT therapists. Also, RCT's relational responsiveness is based upon quality presence. This quality of presence can be culturally different. For some cultures, quietness and reservation of emotions are signs of a good manner. For other cultures, expressing one's honest culture with honest emotions are signs of good manners. Therefore, the quality of relational responsiveness seems idealistic and universalistic to some degree. Rather, *Jeong* has a mixture of relational history of both relational responsiveness and reactivity.

---

<sup>210</sup> Jean Baker Miller, et al., "Therapists' Authenticity," 64-65.

Because it is like a naturally happening event, it is like natural weather. Sometimes it rains and sometimes the sun shines. The constant change of weather impacts people, but, at the same time, a perfect weather controlling system also could make people vulnerable, in real situations. Therefore, there is a constant tension in how to experience relational responsiveness more in our real parent-child relationships, but also to remember that it is challenging for any parent-child relationship. Therefore, we can set up the goal of cultivating relationally responsive parenting, but at the same time, we should not blame the relational reactivity that occurs naturally in our parent-child relationships. Rather, we should authentically respond to parental reactivity or child reactivity after the situation happens. Then, it can be an authentic learning experience for both parents' and children's future interactions.

For example, a mother punishes a child for no apparent reason, and then she cooks a wonderful dinner for the child. The child might feel unsure about why her mother was upset and punished her, but she is happy about being served a great dinner. The combination of punishment and blessing creates mixed feelings of fear and love in the child. Distorted *Jeong* accumulates in the child's heart. This is an example of reactive *Jeong* and its consequences.

Relationally responsive parenting out of Authentic *Jeong* would be different. The mother has had a difficult day at work and is short-tempered with her child. Not telling her child this, the mother yells at her. However, she immediately realizes that she reacted out of her impulsivity, so she explains to her daughter what happened at work, and she apologizes to her. Then, the mother cooks a wonderful dinner as a way to express her remorse and her love for her child. The child feels still a bit of confusion, but to a

lesser degree, and she feels warm, and connected *Jeong* from her mother because her mother has authentically expressed her feelings and emotions. Thus, the daughter feels connection with her mother. If *Jeong* can be expressed from a position of authenticity, then more authentically connected parenting can take place. In other words, if Korean Christian immigrant parents can be aware of *Jeong* and authenticity and integrate the two, this will lead to more connected parenting practices. This is what Authentic *Jeong* looks like in the daily lives of Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships and reveals the difference between relational responsiveness and reactivity.

Third, according to Sang-jin Choi, the Korean way of *Jeong*-centered parent-child relationships is characterized by identification, empathy, lack of differentiation, and relationality. *Jeong*-centered parent-child relationships need to be understood within the context of Korean culture, rather than as pathological structures. As described before, Koreans experience the family as one unit, and each family is a closed and separate system designed to protect the family's honor. Based upon Choi's understanding of Korean parent-child psychological dynamics, the parental self is not divided from their child's self. Therefore, he described it as identical and undifferentiated.

The concept of *Hyo* exacerbates the dynamics of this undifferentiated family psychic structure. Parents, because they are older and more powerful, have the duty to take care of their children. Children have the duty to obey their parents, and when they are adults, they have the duty to serve them as a sign of their gratitude and in order to fulfill their filial obligations. Thus, *Hyo* has been slowly and subtly intermingled with *Jeong* over the years of history to create sticky parent-child relationships in Korean culture.

However, this model may not be the best model for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. It has caused significant suffering for many Korean Christian immigrant families. Korean Christian immigrant parents do not have to automatically drop their traditional ways and adopt Western approaches of relating to their children. However, it is important for Korean Christian immigrant parents to see how their cultural understandings of parent-child relationships conflict with the perceptions of good and healthy parent-child relationships their children are developing in the United States. Since immigrant children are educated in schools where the goal is to raise independent, rational, differentiated persons, Korean Christian immigrant parents' undifferentiated ways of relating cannot be understood as normal, healthy, and loving in the eyes of their children. In order to help create more loving and growth-fostering connections between Korean Christian immigrant parents and children, it is necessary to find a middle way between the types of relationships preferred by Western and Korean cultures.

I will not criticize Korean ways of parent-child relating. Nor will I idealize Western parent-child relationships. My concern, rather, is to have a realistic portrayal of the pain that both Korean Christian immigrant parents and children are going through. Just being who they are can hurt each other. Just showing how much they love can hurt each other. Therefore, I would like to think about the concept of self-in-family that I described in the section on mutuality and *Hyo*. The Korean cultural tendency to see parent-child relationships as identical and undifferentiated seems to be pathological to the dominant U.S. culture. However, it is because of cultural traditions that family is understood as one unit. It is not due to a lack of self-sufficiency or independence, and it should not be seen as a sign of pathology or unhealthy self development. This Korean

parent-child relationship is well understood by examining it from a cultural perspective. Therefore, understanding Korean *Jeong* culture is crucial in order to understand psychic dynamics of Korean parent-child relationships, and to not pathologize culturally unique psychological dynamics in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

However, rationalizing all these elements from a cultural perspective can cause a cultural reductionism. Therefore, it is also necessary to think about the importance of individual self-development for the healthy development of the family. Therefore, I am positing the term “self-in-family” as compared to “self-in-relation.” RCT values the importance of broader social contexts and, in this case, this includes paying attention to the cultural importance of family for Korean self development. This self-in-family understanding of self can be helpful for parents’ development toward more differentiated self-understanding, and more differentiated self and family so that each individual self has room to be free and independent.

Fourth, the *Jeong* practice of taking sides needs to be assessed. The issue is not whether to fix or change the *Jeong* relationship system, but how parents see their own *Jeong*-centered ways of relating from a justice perspective. In Korea, there is unhealthy networking among families, regions, schools, and political parties. For example, when a person applies for a job, the interviewer will check the person’s educational background to see from which school he or she graduated. This tells the interviewer whether the applicant is part of the interviewer's in-group. Such favoritism in relation to family, regional, and school connections has created many issues in the diverse areas of Korean networking. Therefore, foreigners have two drastically different experiences of Korean people. Depending on which side you are standing on, *Jeong* culture can be very positive



or hostile. For example, once a person belongs to the same in-group, then, regardless of the person's qualifications, the person can gain shared power or a position.<sup>211</sup> In this case, foreigners would have the positive and supportive experience of being part of the same group. If someone has a negative experience, then it is probably because this person stands outside of the in-group. Therefore, Choi criticizes *Jeong* as creating unhealthy boundaries between private and public relations, self and others, insiders and outsiders. If there are no healthy boundaries in these areas, there is a high possibility of losing objectivity, rationality, and fairness in decision-making in various areas.<sup>212</sup>

Therefore, *Jeong* culture can create absolute support and networking for the in-group as well as an unfair, unjust favoritism against people who sit outside of the in-group. This *Jeong* culture seems natural for many Korean people. However, this *Jeong*-centered relationship may not be seen as a healthy and ethical relational pattern by Korean Christian immigrant children who are not raised in a dominant *Jeong*-centered relationship. Therefore, how can Korean Christian immigrant parents dance with their culturally familiar and approved relational patterns while living in a different land with different values? Supporting positive networking for the in-group in a U.S. culture can be a very positive source of connection and empowerment. At the same time, this networking and support have to be ethical and just if they want to be role models for their children. Unless this relational pattern is just and fair, their children may not understand what the positive aspect of this relational pattern is. Therefore, authenticity is a difficult and unrealistic concept for common parents to practice. But, if we honestly relate with certain people, we may not fall into an unjust, in-group-oriented *Jeong* culture. One

---

<sup>211</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology], 66-69.

<sup>212</sup> Sang-Chin Choi, 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology], 71.

characteristic of *Jeong* is that it can be slow and unrecognizable. Therefore, sometimes, people cannot experience *Jeong* at the time of their need. In order to complement this aspect of *Jeong*, authenticity will help to increase the possibility of timely attuned care with careful responses. Instead of demonstrating parental deep love or *Jeong* by not expressing emotions for children, parents may give their children a short love letter, give them a warm hug or hand, or give them a word of love in a timely manner, such as right after discipline or conflict.

It is still challenging to live out of a given culture. However, it is also challenging to live in an unjust and unfair way. Therefore I would suggest thinking about what would be the middle way for Korean Christian immigrant parents and children to maintain the positive, supportive networking based upon *Jeong* culture, while at the same time having a more attuned sense of justice and fairness in their relationships.

#### Navigating the Bi/Multicultural Connections for Korean Christian Immigrant Families

I have discussed mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity and *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*. From this discussion, some observations and insights emerged from the dialogue between these two sets of values. I will address those observations and insights in the following table. Jung Young Lee describes a critical contribution to an understanding of marginality. When I compare and contrast these two sets of values, some elements are compatible, others are not. For example, mutuality and *Hyo* are not compatible in a way because they have different understandings of power dynamics. RCT's vulnerability and *Han* are compatible in terms of seeing both as inevitable human realities and hoping to create a transformation of suffering. However, for example, for Korean Christian immigrant parents who have a culture of social face and shame, it is such a challenge to

accept RCT's concept of vulnerability as a transformative and positive form. Also, authenticity and *Jeong* are also complementing and challenging each other. Therefore, based upon the dialogue between mutuality and *Hyo*, vulnerability and *Han*, and authenticity and *Jeong*, I would like to suggest a shared value of Mutual Respect for the dialogue between mutuality and *Hyo*, Transformative Suffering for vulnerability and *Han*, and Authentic *Jeong* for authenticity and *Jeong*. These three combined sets of values are not an artificial combination of half and half. Each set operates with a wide open space for interplay between the two values.

In the space called Mutual Respect, there will be variable forms of combinations of mutuality and *Hyo*. Living under the space called Mutual Respect, is one means for Korean Christian immigrant families to imagine bridging the gaps in their everyday multicultural living. They do not have to put themselves in a certain category but can use these combined values as inviting, open, multiple, fluid possibilities to dance with their concepts of mutuality and *Hyo*. It is the same for Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*. It is hard to imagine that anyone can carry the perfect sense of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*. I suggest that we consider these values to provide multiple and evolving guidelines for Korean Christian immigrant families. They can use these principal values as an imaginative space for living their reality of in-between, in-both, and in-beyond.

As I described in the Chapter Two, Jung Young Lee devised three categories—"In-between," "In-both," and "In-beyond"—to help immigrants understand their

marginality.<sup>213</sup> In-between means that marginality does not have a separate existence of its own, but it is always a relational, open-ended, and unfolding horizon. “In-both” means that there is no center or marginality. Only hybridity exists. “In-beyond” means the world is filled with many centers and margins, and constant tensions between them. For example, Jacob Lee provides examples of using these three categories for assessing a marginalized Korean American woman.<sup>214</sup> From an “In-between perspective,” she is not a Korean because she is away from home. She is not an American because of her ethnicity. From the “In-both perspective,” she is both Korean and American because she is in the United States and her ethnicity is Korean. From the “In-beyond perspective,” she is more than American because she is a Korean. She is more than a Korean because she is an American.

Based upon Jung Young Lee’s categories, and Jacob Lee’s application in an actual case study, I wish to posit the use of the above three concepts. I created the term Mutual Respect with the hope of suggesting one combined value for the dialogue of multiple cultures; Mutual Respect needs to be understood as an In-beyond perspective. The two values are not comparable or worse or better. One Korean Christian immigrant who has cultures of both *Hyo* and Mutuality can have one’s variation of living with these two values. One can be very mutual with a little sense of *Hyo*. The other can be very filial with a little sense of mutuality. These variables are all under the category of Mutual Respect. Within the acknowledgment of each concept’s value, multiple variations, and

---

<sup>213</sup> Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 42-63.

<sup>214</sup> Jacob Hee Cheol Lee, “Shame and Pastoral Care: Implications from an Asian Theological Perspective,” *Pastoral Psychology* 57, no. 5-6 (2009): 257.

equal legitimacy, I navigated these two cultural values. I hope that these insights and observations that I found from the dialogue can foster greater connection in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

The following numerical points are divided into categories of Mutual Respect (Mutuality + *Hyo*); Transformative Suffering (Vulnerability + *Han*); and Authentic *Jeong* (Authenticity + *Jeong*). These are observations and suggestions for fostering Korean Christian immigrant's multicultural living through better connection between Korean Christian parents and children.

#### Mutual Respect (Mutuality + *Hyo*)

- 1) Mutual Respect includes *Hyo* which can be used a value for the healthy use of parental authority for Korean Christian immigrant parents, and also mutuality can be a complemented to practice *Hyo*'s positive aspect of authority for parenting.
- 2) Mutual Respect can be used as a value to acknowledge mutual power of both parents and children and possibly abusive use of *Hyo* can be prevented.
- 3) Mutual Respect includes a value of mutuality that can be used to reconstruct the traditionally known as pathological symptom of parentified child issues. Parentification issue can be reframed from negative family dynamics but as a possible example of parent-child mutuality. It can be used as a new model of reconstruction of parent-child power dynamics.
- 4) Mutual Respect can be used to help the development of culturally appropriate self understanding as "self in family." Mutuality's value of intersubjectivity can meet with the value of *Hyo*'s value in family. This combination can influence the importance of individuality as well as the importance of family.
- 5) Mutual Respect can be used as a value to influence gender equality in family to foster a more gender-equal family dynamic since gender inequality has been the cause of many family conflicts.
- 6) Mutual Respect can be used as a value to reconstruct children's mutuality with adult parents as a contribution for immigration journey to Korean Christian immigrant families.
- 7) Mutual Respect can be used as a value to develop empathy through influencing gender equality in girls' and boys' development. Developing empathy and gender development are closely related.

#### Transformative Suffering (Vulnerability + *Han*)

- 1) Transformative Suffering's primary bases as *Han* and vulnerability presuppose inevitable human realities so that human suffering can be normalized.
- 2) Transformative Suffering supports that human suffering is not a sign of weakness but of courage and transformation.

- 3) Transformative Suffering supports the prayer style of *Tongseong Gido* that can be used to release Korean Christian immigrants' *Han* and vulnerability. Since *Tongseong Gido* is a main part of many Korean Christian immigrant churches' spirituality so that they can release their *Han* and vulnerability on a regular basis without losing face.
- 4) If *Tongseong Gido* is not working for some people, silent prayers are also invited.
- 5) Transformative Suffering is aware that RCT's vulnerability is still a challenging concept for Korean Christian immigrant family to accept due to face and shame.
- 6) Transformative Suffering supports psychoeducation about the challenge of sharing one's *Han* and the value and need of sharing *Han*, and vulnerability for healing.
- 7) Transformative Suffering supports the concept that RCT's vulnerability normalizes parents' lack of expertise in parenting in the U.S culture. So their immigrant parent's status cannot be pathologized.
- 8) Transformative Suffering supports that RCT's vulnerability validates parents' sharing of their uncertainty, lack of expertise, and questions about the child's problems and concerns as a positive value and hope for mutual connection.
- 9) Transformative Suffering is aware of Korean cultural influence of *Han-pu-ri* for Korean Christian immigrant parenting. Children can be used as objects of parents' *Han*. Transformative Suffering understands the danger of misuse of *Han* so that many Korean Christian immigrant parents' request for absolute obedience from their children is a sign of *Han-pu-ri*. Without understanding the dynamics of *Han-pu-ri*, it will be hard to transfer this negative energy into positive energy for their parent-child relationships. Therefore, parents' healing of *Han*, and prevention of *Han-pu-ri* for their children are crucial for better connection.

#### Authentic Jeong (Authenticity + Jeong)

- 1) Authentic *Jeong* includes a value of *Jeong* as slow, gradual, natural delivery of one's love. Authentic *Jeong* includes a value of Authenticity as precise, clear, timely attuned expression of one's love. *Jeong* can be imagined as a foggy rain and authenticity is like a controlled water system. Since *Jeong* is imagined as a natural foggy rain, it reflects lived reality of Korean Christian immigrant relationships. Therefore, authenticity is more natural relationship between well trained RCT therapist and client. Authentic *Jeong* is aware of these differences and complements *Jeong*'s natural love, and authenticity's attuned care for connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.
- 2) Authentic *Jeong* supports the value of *Jeong*'s steadiness, the value of togetherness for connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.
- 3) Authentic *Jeong* supports the value of authenticity's value of genuineness in empathy, relational attunement for connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.
- 4) Authentic *Jeong* supports the value of relational responsiveness which authenticity entails. However, Authentic *Jeong* entails the limit of relational responsiveness for common parents as compared to trained therapists. Therefore, common parents' reactivity cannot be pathologized. But, common parents' reactivity can be modeled from relational responsiveness which authenticity carries as its values.
- 5) Authentic *Jeong* supports more differentiated parent-child relationship from the value of authenticity. However, Authentic *Jeong* doesn't pathologize Korean Confucian

concept of family that is family is one unit. Therefore, middle ground of authentically differentiated family relationships will be navigated for their connection.

6) Authentic *Jeong* is aware of the possible danger of *Jeong*-centered, unjust favoritism so that the excessive use of the value of *Jeong* for a creating an in-group centered dynamics needs to be examined for better connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

In addition to the above suggestions, below I offer observations based upon more practical values for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Divided by the same categories, the suggestions below detail how such interrelating values can promote better connection within Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

#### Mutual Respect (*Hyo* + Mutuality)

- 1) Mutual Respect can be used as a basis of practicing authoritative parenting style as compared to authoritarian parenting style.
- 2) Mutual Respect supports the reality of parent-child's mutual support and mutual growth.
- 3) Mutual Respect can help both parents and children to be more emphatic in their verbal and non-verbal mode of empathy.
- 4) Mutual Respect can lessen the pathology of the pattern of immigrant family.
- 5) Mutual Respect can see immigrant family life as a growth opportunity.
- 6) Mutual Respect can lessen the sense of shame for their lack of traditional competence as parents.
- 7) Mutual Respect can increase immigrant parents' valuing of the individual self.
- 8) Mutual Respect can increase the value of family for immigrant children.

#### Transformative Suffering (*Han* + Vulnerability)

- 1) Transformative Suffering values *Han*-ridden and vulnerable reality as a norm for Korean Christian immigrant family.
- 2) Transformative Suffering helps Korean Christian immigrant family members to share their *Han*, vulnerability because that is not a sign of failure or of weakness but a sign of strength, courage, and transformation.
- 3) Transformative Suffering supports the use of *Tongseong Gido* as a way to deepen their spirituality of vulnerability. Silent prayers are also accepted.
- 4) Transformative Suffering understands the challenge of vulnerability for the Korean Christian immigrant family. Each Korean Christian immigrant family will be different in terms of accepting and using the value of Transformative Suffering.
- 5) Transformative Suffering encourages parents or/and children to take the psychoeducation class when it is available at the church or community.
- 6) Transformative Suffering can be used as a value at home. For example, if RCT's vulnerability is educated and practice is encouraged at home, they can share their lack of expertise, for example with English. Parents can be open about their need for help.

However, when parents' ask help their children should not be authoritarian but authoritative with high warmth.

7) If Transformative Suffering is used as home for their better connection, children will not be used objects of parents' *Han-pu-ri*; thus, parent-child conflict can be reduced.

8) Transformative Suffering is used for parents and children's healing and transformation; transformed and healed *Han* and vulnerability can be used for parents and children's healthy transformation of their energy.

9) Transformative Suffering supports the role of psychoeducation. Both parents and children are informed and the family as a whole is open to seek for help for this education to foster their growth opportunity. Family immigration experience can be a family adventure.

#### Authentic Jeong (*Jeong* + Authenticity)

1) Authentic *Jeong* can be used for more emotionally attuned care for children and parents.

2) Authentic *Jeong* can be used if there is conflict and pain from emotional reactivity by parents and/or children; they have to be "relationally responsive" about their unwanted reactivity.

3) Authentic *Jeong* supports the family psychoeducation about the importance of *Jeong* culture for parent-child relationship in terms of *Jeong*'s togetherness and steadiness.

4) Authentic *Jeong* supports more relationally responsive parenting.

5) Authentic *Jeong* is aware of *Jeong*'s complexity and ambiguity. It is recommended that these be addressed at psychoeducation to normalize human ambiguity and complexity as well as to foster understanding about their own ambiguity and complexity experienced in the *Jeong* culture at home. Both parents and children are invited to share their experience of *Jeong* at home, school and society.

6) Authentic *Jeong* supports the concept that family seeks to understand the different self and family understanding based upon different cultures. This education will help the family to understand the different way of parent-child relationship in multicultural society.

7) Authentic *Jeong* supports parents becoming aware of *Jeong* culture's contextual irrationality; favoritism can be both positive and negative, especially for their parenting as a role model for their children.

Based upon all these recommendations for fostering a better connection in Korean Christian immigrant families, we are led back to the question, what is a connection?

Connection for Korean Christian immigrant families is multiple, like a river that has all elements of *Hyo*, *Han*, *Jeong*, mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity. Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* are suggested phrases to embrace the complexity, ambiguity, and interconnectedness within each of the terms as well as the



incompatibility within each term. However, one thing is certain that connection should be pondered and reflected upon. Then, we may face all the messiness, complexity, and overwhelming feelings of relating, and questions like “how can we deal with this all together?” But this is the reality for most people living in multicultural societies.

Therefore, this argument is just one case study of dancing with six concepts to address more practical wisdom for multicultural living and connection. Connections are complex, multiple, fluid, changing, and sometimes hurtful. In this regard, the definition of *Jeong* might best address the complexity and ambiguity of human relationships. For Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships, I imagine a space in which all six elements are dancing together. So, once these six elements find balanced rhythm, all kinds of different sets of values are all dancing and enjoying, missing their steps sometimes, so that they have to work at finding a way to settle down their way of dancing. But, one big rule for this dancing is that there should be safety for trying out new steps. There should be grace for stepping on each other’s toes. If they mis-step too many times, people may want to leave the ballroom. Dance with respect for other people’s dancing, even if you do not like their moves. But don’t be discouraged and leave the ballroom. Or, if you feel like this ballroom dance doesn’t fit your culture and need, you may go out and ring the gong and play outside for your own performance without being shamed. This is how we all respect our own power, vulnerability, pain, and hope for connection.

### Conclusion

This chapter aims to address the importance of disconnection and its healing through connection in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Therefore, I chose the psychological modality of Relational Cultural Theory and consulted with its

wisdom on how to foster connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Based upon the literature review in Chapter Two on Korean parent-child relationships, Korean Christian parent-child relationships, and Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships, I draw the reader's attention to the need for wisdom in multicultural living, multiple approaches to parent-child relationships, and Korean cultural values in order to understand Korean Christian immigrant parent-child dynamics. Relational Cultural Theory indicates the basic important concepts for relationship, the centrality of community for one's connection, how painful human being connections can be, and implications of relational self-understanding for relational cultural parenting. However, RCT cannot serve as the only source for establishing connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship, due to its own limitations and its failure to embrace the complexity of Korean cultural components of connection. Therefore, the Korean cultural values of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* were invited to the table to begin a dialogue with the values of mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity. I compared and contrasted these two sets of values which are important for RCT's connection and intimacy for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

From this comparison and contrast, some concepts are compatible and complement each other. Others are and do not. However, addressing these multiple concepts enables us to think about what connection in multicultural living means for Korean Christian immigrant families, especially in light of human complexity, ambiguity and relationality. This cultural and psychological reflection on the challenges and benefits of dialogue with multiple concepts is intended to indicate the real challenge of people who live under multicultural values on a daily basis without any simple answers.

At the end of this chapter, I provided two sets of lists that offer insight into the connection of Korean Christian immigrant multicultural living and another table indicating how these values promote a better connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. I conclude by addressing the dialogical process between these two sets of values and draw out my personal assessment and recommendations for constructing a better connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. On the basis of my observation of this dialogical process, I posit that Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* taken together offer one possible suggested principle for enhanced connection in Korean Christian immigrant families. Each concept can challenge and complement the others. These shared values can be changing, fluid, contextual and temporary. But these are standing values.

This chapter has made it clear that the values of Korean cultural concepts and RCT's concepts are critical to foster a new connectional model for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. From this process, I contend that the role of Christian spirituality is important toward the fostering of relational connection. For example, I recommend some psychoeducational programs for Korean Christian immigrant families in order to educate them about the role of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* and RCT's concepts, their importance in light of immigration, and their implications for parent-child relationships. One of the options for this educational context is a Korean immigrant church. Churches provide readily available contexts, and people tend not to have resistance toward receiving this kind of education at the church. I will address this pastoral care and counseling program in Chapter Six.

Based upon Korean Christian immigrant families' strong attachment to Korean immigrant churches and their evangelical theology, biblical interpretation can be a powerful tool for Korean Christian immigrant families to think about their way of connection. In Chapter Four, I raise the importance of Korean cultural concepts for the biblical interpretation of the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. Addressing the importance of cultural values for multiple biblical interpretations is liberating and empowering and offers uplift to marginalized Korean Christian immigrants. Remaining silent and voiceless about their immigrant stories enables Korean Christian immigrant families to feel disconnected from the Bible. Sharing and giving voice to these stories is one way to connect the Bible with a real Korean Christian immigrant story. Therefore, in Chapter Four I will discuss the value of multiplicity in biblical interpretation to address the importance of Korean Christian immigrants' cultural locations. This emphasizes the message that multiple biblical interpretations can embrace, empower, and connect marginalized people with the Bible in a liberating way. Eventually, this new interpretation will empower and foster Korean Christian immigrant families' toward better connection with themselves, with the church, and with God.

## Chapter 4

### Biblical Reflections on Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

This chapter will aim to identify culturally appropriate and liberating biblical interpretations that empower Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Addressing culturally sensitive, and contextually faithful, biblical interpretation can empower Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships, as compared to one grand theory whose biblical interpretation does not represent their vivid cultural values at all. Therefore, increasing the value of cultural understanding is important to the enrichment of the meaning of the Bible for readers in culturally different locations. Postmodern theology argues against the value of a grand theory and for partial truth value instead.<sup>215</sup> I would like to address a possibility of a different biblical interpretation with sensitivity to Korean cultural traditions, and communicate with RCT's three values for alternative interpretations of the Bible for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

For the purpose of developing empowering biblical interpretations interrelating the concepts of *Han*, *Hyo*, and *Jeong* and the concepts of mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity, I will consider Genesis 22: 1-19—the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac—from the perspectives of three different groups of people, focusing on the cultural and theological locations of these readers. These perspectives are those of a traditional Korean Christian family, a Korean Christian immigrant family suffering because of role changes, and a Korean Christian immigrant family that is integrating into their

---

<sup>215</sup> Emmanuel Y. Lartey, *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2003), 11-38.

relationships sensitivity to Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* as I described it at the end of the previous chapter.

There are no definitive divisions between the perspectives of these three groups of people, who are conditioned by their external circumstances. I also admit that one's identity is fluid, multiple, changing and that both external and internal identities are important. I agree with Pamela Cooper-White, who asserts the value of "multiplicity," which she describes as accepting multiple roles and identities as well as multiple internal states of emotion and identity.<sup>216</sup> There is no single understanding within each group, and I will further discuss the postmodern emphasis on multiplicity in the following chapter.

Nonetheless, different readings of the same biblical story bring out the importance of cultural location for different people. Korean Christian immigrant parents and children have different cultural-theological locations. Especially, those who are immigrants face constant shifting of their cultural location, a multicultural reality. Their Korean cultural location in their mind, body, and spirit is preserved and lost on a daily basis. At the same time, their U.S. cultural location in their mind, body, and spirit is added and activated on a daily basis. Based on this shifting standpoint, and adding cultural, theological, and hermeneutical interpretations in this postmodern age, we read the Bible. Therefore, I will argue that these three groups of people, a traditional Korean family, a Korean Christian family, and a Korean Christian immigrant family, will have a different biblical understanding based upon their cultural location. Therefore, I will validate the importance of cultural locations in biblical interpretations and uplift the value of multiple

---

<sup>216</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, "Complicated Woman: Multiplicity and Relationality across Gender and Culture," in *Women Out of Order: Risking Change and Creating Care in a Multicultural World*, ed. Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner and Teresa Snorton (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 9.

possibilities of biblical interpretation to liberate and foster a connection between Korean Christian immigrant people who locate themselves in multiple and different settings, particularly with regard to their understandings about parent-child relationships.

Depending on the different cultural locations of parent-child relationships, the message of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac will be very differently understood. These multiple possibilities of biblical interpretation do create multiple connections between the bible story and different people's perceptions.

Especially, I will use *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* as lenses to imagine and compare how their different cultural location could impact their reading of the Bible stories. Will it impact their biblical interpretation at all? Or will it totally shift the message? Or does this shift happen in a different way among family members due to different acculturation rates? Then, for each family member, the story of the Bible might sound liberating and oppressing at the same time.

Genesis 22 is a controversial story. One person reads it as a perfect example of human's absolute obedience to God. Another reads it as a story of God advocating child abuse. Let us imagine that *Han*, *Hyo*, *Jeong* make this a 3-D story from a Korean Christian immigrant perspective. Then, what would happen if we wear two-dimensional lenses to see a three dimensional movie? Without wearing three-dimensional eye glasses, a 3-D movie may not be able to show its three dimensional effects; rather it will be seen as a series of foggy scenes. If you want to understand what I mean, take off your three-dimensional glasses at a showing of a 3-D movie!

Think about reading Genesis 22 as if you were watching 3-dimensional movies. Then, also imagine that you start from two-dimensional eye glasses. Then, imagine that

your seating is also changing. Isn't it confusing and challenging? However, imagine that this might be the life of Korean Christian immigrants. Some people may have a residue of emotional attachment even though their seating arrangement is shifted. Other people may want to wear three-dimensional eye-glasses all the time even though the special effect is over.

I also argue that a possible standpoint within each group is just one possibility out of the multiplicity of possible perspectives within the group over time and from individual to individual. There also might be a mixing of views that makes it difficult to distinguish a traditional Korean Christian family from a Korean Christian immigrant family. There are possibilities for fluidity and multiplicity in re-reading and re-imagining these stories. Enjoy your three-dimensional movie in a changing seat.

#### The Importance of the Bible for the Marginalized

The Bible is one of the important authorities for Korean Christian immigrant parent-family relationships. Implicitly or explicitly, their family ethos is strongly influenced by their Christian faith. It is hard to find literature that examines how much Korean immigrant church theology impacts each individual in such a relationship. However, it is implied that there could be a strong influence on their children of the Korean Christian parent's faith, based upon their literal understanding of the Bible, since there is a strong connection between immigrant life and Protestant evangelical Christian faith.<sup>217</sup> That is because the character of Korean immigrant church theology is known as evangelical and fundamental theology that sees the Bible as the most important authority

---

<sup>217</sup> I reviewed literature in Chapter Two describing the evangelical nature of most Protestant Korean churches. Most evangelical theology supports biblical inerrancy, a strong value in most Protestant Korean immigrant churches.



of their life. Therefore, the role of the Bible has been tremendously important for Korean Christians, and this has not really changed for immigrants.

The importance of the Bible for Korean Christians is not debatable. There has been a feminist debate about whether the Bible is liberating for women, as I will explain later in this chapter. I acknowledge that the Bible has controversial issues for women's liberation. The Chinese feminist scholar Kwok Pui-lan asserts the importance of the Bible for the liberation of Asian women. I agree with her assertion of the importance of the Bible as a useful authority from an Asian feminist perspective. Kwok argues that the Bible, considered the most important authority by many Christians, has been empowering for women and minorities. Kwok and many Asian Christians consider the Bible the most sacred text, as they have chanted, recited, and memorized its verses throughout their history of Christian faith. Reading the Bible, and re-reading the Bible, is not just about focusing on what happened in the past in the text, but it is a participatory act that gives meaning to current Christian living.<sup>218</sup> Thus, Kwok explains the importance of the use of the Bible from an Asian Christian perspective. She asserts that there is a great need to interpret the Bible from Asian women's perspective in order to claim the divine presence within Asian women's experiences.<sup>219</sup> Kwok argues for the use of the Bible to empower Asian women's fellowship and ecumenical gatherings.

The role of the Bible is important for the marginalized. Korean feminist theologian Hyun Kyung Chung, who teaches in the United States, has not directly addressed the authority of the Bible in her book, but she asserts Mary's important role, not only as a virgin mother but also as a true disciple. She points out that Mary was the

---

<sup>218</sup> Kwok Pui-lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2000), 53-54.

<sup>219</sup> Kwok Pui-lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist theology*, 51.

first person to witness the resurrection of Jesus Christ; therefore, the role of Mary as a true disciple should be used to empower women.<sup>220</sup> Thus, it can be implied that Chung intends to empower women's silence and unaddressed leadership in the Bible so that this biblical message can liberate silenced Korean Minjung women.

Japanese feminist theologian Hisako Kinukawa has also developed a sociological and rhetorical approach to the Bible that combines her training in Western biblical scholarship with feminist insights. In her *Women and Jesus in Mark*, she shows how a Japanese value system of honor, shame, and gender discrimination can be interpolated into the reading of the Bible. She asserts that the biblical texts are not "data for historical reconstruction" but "expressive discourses reflecting the symbolic worlds out of which they come."<sup>221</sup>

These Asian feminist biblical interpretations do not exist within a historical vacuum. For many years, some Western feminist theologians have seen the importance of reinterpreting patriarchal understandings of the Christian tradition, like the Bible or the church, for the sake of liberating marginalized people who had previously been excluded from traditional interpretations. In *In Memory of Her*, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza began a reconstruction of Christian history that would memorialize the important role women had played in that history. She does not want to discard the Bible completely, as some feminists do, but instead, she seeks to find meaning in the current canon, because she does not believe that the Bible is an old, outdated text; rather, it still impacts people's

---

<sup>220</sup> Hyun Kyung Chung, *Struggle to Be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women's Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1990), 81.

<sup>221</sup> Hisako Kinukawa, *Women and Jesus in Mark* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1994). Kwok Pui-lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology*, 55-56.

lives in important ways.<sup>222</sup> So, Schüssler Fiorenza uses a feminist historiography in order to reconstruct a canon of the equal discipleship of men and women, therefore placing value on both in early Christian history. She tells the stories of Prisca, Lydia, Junia, and Phoebe as active early missionaries who functioned in the midst of a social and cultural atmosphere that marginalized women. Thus the ancient texts tend to exclude women's presence and contributions.<sup>223</sup>

Other formative feminist mothers have supported the idea of the Bible as an important resource. Rosemary Ruether and Letty Russell note the importance of the tradition and create methodologies to reframe or re-read the tradition. Both authors find hidden messages for women's liberation amidst the patriarchy of the tradition. Ruether and Russell find a canonical message and vision to re-establish women's rituals and women's images of divinity. For example, Ruether names her methodology "reading between the lines." This method involves astute reading of traditional canons like the Bible or other available ancient materials in order to uncover liberating images of women and small voices for giving new theological vision to women's church involvement and women's leadership. In her book, *Womanguides*, Ruether presents references from the tradition and reads between the lines to recover women's history in the faith tradition.<sup>224</sup> Russell labels her methodology "talking back to tradition," a term that she draws from bell hooks. Following hooks' approach, Russell asserts that the tradition should be challenged by liberating voices, including the voices of feminists who question the male-

---

<sup>222</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983).

<sup>223</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 27.

<sup>224</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Womanguides: Readings toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985). Throughout this book, there are examples of Ruether's work to re-read the Bible in order to find a meaningful message for women.

centeredness of the church tradition.<sup>225</sup> Phyllis Trible aspires to reinterpret the biblical stories of women, usually by retelling the stories of women from a perspective that empowers their voices.<sup>226</sup> For example, she views Hagar as a unique woman who speaks with divinity directly, which is a contrasting perspective to most traditional interpretations that see her as an object, a silenced victim. Ruether, Russell, and Trible all wrestle with the Bible to empower the marginalized within the reality that the Bible was constructed in patriarchal culture. I do value this wrestling to find meaning-making in our given reality.

However, there seems to be a difference between Ruether's and Kwok's emphasis on the importance of the biblical tradition. For example, in *Womenguides*, Ruether made an attempt to trace back to the tradition and talk about the value of female images and empowering the silenced value of the Bible for the women and the minority; Kwok asserts the Bible itself as an important symbol and power for Asian Christian women.

This struggle is the same struggle I have in interpreting the Bible, Christianity, church, and family, which all have complicated and controversial natures of both liberating and oppressing humanity. I reiterate that the role of the Bible is still important for the Korean Christian immigrant family. Therefore, it is important to me as a pastor and pastoral caregiver to be aware of how the Bible can empower, how it can oppress, and how theological, cultural, social, and national location has an impact on the biblical message. Thus, as a Korean Christian immigrant feminist theologian, I assert that the Bible is important to empower the Korean Christian immigrant family.

---

<sup>225</sup> Letty M. Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 35.

<sup>226</sup> Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 1-29.

### The Importance of Non-Western and Non-Christian Traditions in the Bible

Within the history of both Western and Asian feminist movements to re-read the Bible as a way to empower marginalized women's voices, there is still an exclusion of non-Western and non-Christian traditions in these efforts. As Musa Dube, a postcolonial feminist theologian, points out, Schüssler Fiorenza's reconstructive work, like most other Western feminist works, impressively evoked a great response that began an epoch in liberating the Bible in order to liberate Western women. However, Schüssler Fiorenza downplays the significant influence of imperial oppression against non-Westerners and non-Christians. She does not see the Roman world as a "political center," much less as an "imperial center." She presents the "struggle between the emerging Christian movement and its alternative vision, on the one hand, and the dominant patriarchal ethos of the Greco-Roman world on the other." Therefore, her presentation of early Christian history sets up the patriarchal oppression of women by Gentile and Jewish men as the main oppression of women in the Roman world. In other words, the Roman imperial oppression of the Jewish people, both men and women, as well as of other colonized peoples, is excluded.<sup>227</sup>

Namsoon Kang points out the dangers of losing sight of the current effects of imperialism. She notes that many early Asian feminist theologians shared their stories of oppression in their Asian social locations, like many early African feminists did. These stories were translated into English and spread into Western society, becoming sources for generalizing that all "Asian women" are victimized and abused women. For example, Mary Daly, in her book *Gyn/Ecology*, universalizes Asian and African women's

---

<sup>227</sup> Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 29.

oppression in this way. Thus, white Western feminists continued a tradition of colonialism by lumping all Asian and African women together into an objectified, victimized class, overlooking and ignoring the strengths of individual women. This is just another form of oppression.<sup>228</sup> Kang also points out the diverse geopolitical reality of Asian women in this global age. Therefore, she asserts that understanding Asian women identities has to be “post ethnic,” acknowledging the importance of globalization and its impact for crafting multiple identities.<sup>229</sup> Dube and Kang both argue that the sense of liberation from the perspective of the First-World feminists continues an imperialistic history. There are missing marginalized people in the liberation process.

It is necessary to bring the particular voices of indigenous peoples to biblical interpretation until it includes all people’s voices and all people’s liberation. Dube asserts the importance of indigenous people’s cultures for their faith development, and she discusses the effects of these cultures not being valued by Western missionaries. In this regard, Kwok asserts:

For a very long period of history, the institutionalized Christian Church has adopted a vehemently exclusivist position in talking about truth, revelation, the Bible, and Christ. When missionaries arrived in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, trying to convert people, they condemned our ancestors, trashed our gods and goddesses and severed us from our indigenous cultures. Many missionaries, both male and female, accused indigenous traditions of being oppressive to women without the slightest recognition of the sexist ideology of Christianity.<sup>230</sup>

Kwok’s words raise some important thoughts: traditionally, Western Christian imperialists’ stances devalued and demonized indigenous people’s traditional religious

---

<sup>228</sup> Namsoon Kang, “Re-Constructing Asian Feminist Theology: Toward Glocal Feminist Theology in an Era of Neo-Empire(s),” in *Christianity in Asia*, ed. Sebastian Kim (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), 1-6.

<sup>229</sup> Namsoon Kang, “Out of Places: Asian Feminist Theology of Dislocation,” in *Out of Place*, ed. Clive Pierce and Jione Hevea, Cross Cultural Series (London: Equinox, forthcoming), 1-6.

<sup>230</sup> Kwok Pui-lan, “Doing Theology from Third World Women’s Perspective,” in *Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader*, ed. Ursula King (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1994), 68.

cultures, and they did not see traditional cultures as critical to people's salvation. Like early white feminist thinkers, such as Elisabeth Cady Stanton and Mary Daly, the early missionaries tended to give attention to gender oppression over imperialism. By doing so, they privileged the rights of the West and its Christian traditions to impose upon and dominate the women and men of Africa, Asia, and other indigenous societies, along with Jews.<sup>231</sup>

It is meaningful to trace the historical roots of feminism to see the importance of the Bible for liberation, but Western privileges were assumed in their argument. Currently, post-colonial biblical scholars emphasize the importance of cultural perspectives of biblical interpretation for the empowerment of the minority. Fernando Segovia gives three reasons that it is important to involve more racial and ethnic minorities in biblical studies: 1) the multiracial and ethnic geographical context of the biblical texts; 2) the lack of diversity in race and ethnicity in the current White-centered professional guilds of biblical studies; and 3) the significant role of race and ethnicity in biblical studies. Biblical stories include people of different races, nations, and ethnic backgrounds, and in many studies, those multiracial and ethnic backgrounds are not dealt with critically.<sup>232</sup> Those topics are treated as unimportant, trivial; early feminists' issues were treated in the same way. Also, the current professional guilds are dominated by White-centered scholars. It is important to bring more diverse scholarship to enrich the spectrum of liberation of hidden agents in the stories of the Bible. Accordingly, Segovia insists that currently, in terms of the geographical world, professional guilds, and the role

---

<sup>231</sup> Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, 30.

<sup>232</sup> Fernando F. Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View From the Margins* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2000), 171-174.

of ethnic minorities, these silenced areas need to be embraced. Then, in this way, biblical interpretation for liberating minorities will be fully meaningful.<sup>233</sup>

Similarly, in the United States, the need of cultural interpretation for minority people and scholars is increasing. R.S. Sugirtharajah, a postcolonial scholar, argues that the United States is an empire, based upon a flexible and fluid definition of postcolonialism. Traditionally, postcolonialism defines Europe as the colonizer. However, he argues that the United States is a colonizing country for two reasons. First, the United States is engaged in displacing people with successive waves of immigration, which involved controlling the quota of immigrants for the benefit of U.S. society's needs, which still continues. Second, writers from U.S. ethnic minority groups, like Native Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans, and Asian Americans, face precisely the same kind of marginalization and cultural erasure that writers from Africa, India, and other settler colonies face.<sup>234</sup> As Sugirtharajah points out, in the United States, the interest in cultural interpretation for these minority people has been dealt with as a trivial issue.

Postcolonial experiences written by authors who are Australian Aboriginal, Canadian First Nations, New Zealand Maori, indigenous African, and American Indians assume significance, as they are derived from a matrix of indigenous experiences. This is important, because the values assigned to literary expression in native cultures may share more in common with each other than with the values of Western literary

---

<sup>233</sup> Fernando F. Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins*, 171-174.

<sup>234</sup> R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 34-35.



representation.<sup>235</sup> The scenario is similar to the one the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) faced in its formative years. The vexing question that tormented the original founders, who came from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, was whether to include African Americans and Native Americans in their formed group. Their decision to allow them to be part of EATWOT was eventually decided on the basis of their marginality.<sup>236</sup> So far, they have had discussions about the importance of the value of inclusivity that is limited not only to gender, but also to class, culture, race, and minority status.

Therefore, it is both implicit and explicit that, seeing the importance of the Bible for the Korean Christian immigrant family, the empowerment of Korean Christian immigrants with regard to their cultural values as well as their ethnic minority identity, would liberate them as a subjective reader of the Bible. Korean feminist Oo Jeong Lee, one of the pioneers of Korean feminist theology, has used biblical stories to promote national reunification and peace between North and South Korea. She asserts the importance of peace and unification to salvation, and she emphasizes the concept of shalom to bring out the multiple theological meanings of “a state of well being, health, safety, the absence of war, prosperity.”<sup>237</sup> Lee's treatment of a distinctive Korean national reality—national division—as a significant theological topic provides an appropriate transition to an analysis of the situation of Korean Christian immigrant parents: the importance of the Bible for them and how their cultural location impacts their theological discourse, what Korean cultural issues are important, and how the Korean Christian

---

<sup>235</sup> R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, 35.

<sup>236</sup> R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, 34-35.

<sup>237</sup> Oo Jeong Lee, *Women of Courage: Asian Women Reading the Bible* (Seoul: AWRC). Cited by Kwok Pui-lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology*, 55-56.

immigration process impacts their Biblical interpretation in both empowering and oppressing ways.

The Importance of Korean Cultures in Re-Reading Genesis 22:1-19.

Reading the Bible is a constructive task that I will take up by engaging the works of various feminist and non-Western scholars from the perspective of my concern for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. We have established in the previous section that numerous scholars now emphasize that empowering one's minority voice, valuing one's own culture, and being aware of one's social-political location does make a difference in interpretation of the Bible. In the remainder of this chapter, I will be providing such situated readings of a biblical story—God's call to Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac (Gen. 22:1-19). This story is well known to Korean Christian and Korean Christian immigrant parents, as an example of a story that depicts absolute obedience to God as well as absolute obedience to human parents. I will imaginatively read this biblical story through the lenses of persons representing three different perspectives. I will begin with reading the story from the perspectives of traditional Korean Christian parent-child relationships in Korea and of Korean Christian immigrant families in the United States that are suffering because of role changes. For these two readings, I will compare and contrast the role played by the Korean cultural values of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* in the biblical interpretation of these two types of Korean Christian families—with emphasis on their different cultural locations because of immigration. I will also read the story from the perspective of a Korean Christian immigrant family that is integrating into their relationships sensitivity to the synthesis I described in the previous chapter of

Korean cultural values and RCT values—Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*.

Along with the insights above, re-reading biblical stories from a different perspective has been a strategy used by feminist theologians like Phyllis Trible, Pamela Cooper-White, and Heesung Chung to reclaim victims' voices and possibly empower silenced and marginalized voices within the Bible. For example, Trible tries to bring new insights to silenced, distorted, and discouraged women's stories in the Bible and move their interpretation in a more constructive direction. She reframes silenced and abused women's stories. For example, she renames "Hagar as story as the desolation of rejection, Tamar's as the royal rape of wisdom, and the daughter of Jephthah as an example of inhuman sacrifice."<sup>238</sup> Cooper-White re-reads the story of Tamar so that it becomes a Tamar-centered and victim-centered story, rather than a male-centered story.<sup>239</sup> Heesung Chung similarly re-tells this story to empower the victim, but she is focused on using this re-reading and re-telling of the story to empower Korean sexual abuse victims, like the well-known survivor, Bo-un Kim.<sup>240</sup>

As our foremothers in feminist theology and pastoral care and counseling have done, I am re-reading Genesis 22:1-19. I am doing so because this story evokes from Koreans strong associations with *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*. Similarly, the story also provides a biblical narrative with which I can work to employ the concepts of mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity, as well as demonstrate the synthesis I have proposed of

---

<sup>238</sup> Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*, 9-93.

<sup>239</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *The Cry of Tamar: Violence against Women and the Church's Response* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), xiii-14.

<sup>240</sup> Heesung Chung, "An Exploration of a Feminist Pastoral Method From the Perspective of a Korean Woman," *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 46-58.

Korean and RCT values: Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*.

I will argue that using these interrelating concepts to read this story can empower and help heal Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

A Story of *Hyo, Han, and Jeong*.

When I was a child in Korea, I heard the story of Genesis 22:1-19 over and over in Sunday school classrooms and sermons, and I was not troubled by it. Even in adulthood, this passage did not bother me until I was exposed to a feminist critique of it that showed me how it reinforces violence in Christian parent-child relationships in the name of adults' perceived faith, obedience, and duty to God. Genesis 22:1-19 is traditionally known as Abraham's test by God, a test of whether he would sacrifice his only beloved son Isaac. The nature of this story is similar to the story of Jesus Christ, who, as an only son of God, is sacrificed according to God's demand; later he is glorified as a result of his sacrifice. The reinforcement these two powerful biblical stories give to the notion of sacrificing a child to glorify God's plan has been criticized by many feminists, because it communicates a confusing message to the reader: that faith and violence complement one another, even where children are the victims of violence. In order to protect children and powerless people's rights, most feminist theologians focus on how to prevent violence against women and children. For example, Rita Nakashima Brock criticizes the doctrine of salvation as a way to reinforce or support benign paternalism, the neglect of children, or worse, child abuse. In the name of faith and obedience, some Christian parents allow the suffering of their children, or inflict suffering and even death, on them, because such behavior has been exemplified by God

the father and by Abraham as an ancestor of the Christian faith.<sup>241</sup> As the feminist critique notes, the doctrine of atonement and biblical passages like Genesis 22:1-19 can send us a confusing or sometimes very dangerous message for our parent-child relationships.

However, I ask myself, “Why wasn’t I terrified while listening to this story as a child? Why did I listen and accept this story as a good example of faith without identifying myself as a child who was at risk of violence and death?” Would I have the same feeling if this story was released in the local news as a child kidnapping case?” Why was my morality and sense of security not activated to listen carefully to what really happened in this story of Abraham, Isaac, and silenced Sarah?” I can see now that I had been educated by Korean culture not to be surprised by this story. Korean Confucian culture emphasizes *Hyo* as the highest norm and virtue, so this culture is deeply embedded in daily life. One of the most prevalent educational methods is children’s folktales. Most children’s folktales include the importance of *Hyo* as the highest value.

Many types of stories share the valuing of *Hyo*. There are folktales that have a motif of children’s sacrifice for *Hyo*. Here is a commonly told folktale called *Sansamhyoja* (literal translation: sacrifice his child for a wild ginseng called *sansam* for his sick parent): One day, the filial son found out that his mother’s disease could be healed by feeding her his son’s body. He found his son on his way home from school, and he put him in a big pot of boiling water. When he took the lid off the kettle, he

---

<sup>241</sup> Rita Nakashima Brock, “A Little Child Will Lead Us: Christology and Child Abuse,” in *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, ed. Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1990), 52.

discovered his son had become *sansam*. He was then surprised to see his son walk in the door, alive. Due to the father's filial piety, his son and his sick mother were both alive.

Here is another Korean folktale: When a family was crossing a river, the focal couple faced a crisis of having to make a decision about whom they would save first. The value they followed in their decision-making was filial piety, *Hyo*, so they sacrificed their son in order to save their parents. Their son died, but they were praised as being loyal children.<sup>242</sup> *Hyo*-related folktales continue to be prevalent, so the embedded belief still exists that serving one's parents is the highest norm.

Teasoo Seo critiques the concept of *Hyo* and its impact on modern Korean families. He points out that *Hyo* culture is 1) male-centered, 2) family-centered, and 3) elder-centered.<sup>243</sup> In other words, in the *Hyo* stories, it is usually or mostly fathers who decide to sacrifice their sons. Thus, the stories focus on males, and mothers and wives are mostly silent. Also, the family is treated as a unit. So, family legacy and family honor generally override individual choice and consideration of individuals. The pains of the father, mother, child, or other possibly marginalized family members are excluded. Their pain can be expressed as *Han*: their *Han* is totally excluded, silenced, and marginalized. Lastly, in *Hyo* stories, serving and respecting the elder is a higher priority than protecting children's rights and lives.

Seo analyzes the psychological thinking underlying such decisions. Most *Hyo*-related folktales ask parents to choose between a child's and a parent's life. In most cases, the parents who are in-between decide to sacrifice their child because they believe that

---

<sup>242</sup> Teasoo Seo, "자녀 희생 효 설화를 통해 본 효행 주체 의식 [The Agency of Hyo from Reviewing Hyo Folktale of Child's Sacrifice]," *청람어문학* [Chungram Munhak] 5 (1991): 1-32.

<sup>243</sup> Teasoo Seo, "자녀 희생 효 설화를 통해 본 효행 주체 의식 [The Agency of Hyo from Reviewing Hyo Folktale of Child's Sacrifice]," 1-32.

their child is replaceable: we can have another child, but we cannot have another parent. Ironically, in folktales, once parents sacrifice their child, their parent(s) are saved, no matter how severe the situation they were facing; the decision-making parents are praised, and their wishes are fulfilled, not just morally and psychologically but also materialistically. So, in the stories, parents choose *Hyo* and their wishes are fulfilled. In the meantime, the pain and vulnerability of the parents, children, and possibly saved grandparents, and their love for their son, are totally disregarded.<sup>244</sup> Without adding the *Han* of the mother, the child, and also the father in these stories, the folktales do not portray the full spectrum of parent-child dynamics in a situation of family crisis.

Reading Genesis 22:1-19 as a Korean person in whom the culture of *Hyo* is embedded, it is not difficult to hear the story of Genesis 22:1-19 as a story of *Hyo*, because the plot of the story is so similar to Korean folktales and so familiar to Korean Confucian Christians. From our Korean Confucian cultural perspective, Genesis 22:1-19 is a story of a man called Abraham who exercises filial piety toward his father, God. It is not surprising for Abraham to make the decision without any qualms (at least from what the text says) to kill his son and it seems only natural that he is glorified and blessed. Unless someone is really urged to think about the pain of the parents and the child, it is easy to put this story in the frame of a *Hyo* folktale. Therefore, even as a little girl, I was not surprised or terrified by this story. The story of Abraham and Isaac has the same characteristics as Korean folktales: it is male-centered, family-centered and elder-centered. The main characters of this story are Abraham and Isaac. Abraham is the main subject of Abraham's family and Sarah does not appear in this story. Instead of a human

---

<sup>244</sup> Teasoo Seo, “자녀 희생 효 설화를 통해 본 효행 주체 의식 [The Agency of *Hyo* from Reviewing *Hyo* Folktale of Child's Sacrifice],” 17.

elder, God is the father who needs to be obeyed and shown absolute duty by his son.

Although many Korean families do not hold this value of *Hyo* as the highest value anymore, it is generally true that it is still embedded in the culture as the highest value.

Therefore, this Genesis story has been interpreted as a story of *Hyo* for many ordinary Korean Christian readers who are embedded in Confucian cultures in Korea. It is well understood by Korean Christians as portraying the importance of giving obedience and blessings to elders and to God. Thus, disobedience to humans and God can be identified, and this reinforcement undoubtedly impacts their relational dynamics, emphasizing hierarchical ways of relating. Within these dynamics, faithful Korean Christians should practice *Hyo* toward their human fathers, spiritual fathers (pastors), and God the father. This cultural stance reinforces hierarchical and patriarchal theological values in their faith development.

Therefore, in addition to the impact of the basic patriarchal nature of Korean Confucianism on Korean parent-child relationships (for example, *Bu Ja Yu Chin*), the Confucian value of *Hyo* reinforces patriarchy, specifically hierarchy in relationships between parents and children, pastors and parishioners, and individual Christians and God the father. Also, like *Eom Bu Ja Mo*, which still can be perceived as a typical Korean way of relating, this Bible story does not present a place for a mother's love and for her intervention in the sacrifice of her child. The absence of Sarah and many other mothers is typical in these kinds of stories, as is also children's voices. In addition to the influence of *Eom Bu Ja Mo*, for a Korean Christian who perceives God as a parent, the absence of the mother's affection could be extended to represent the absence of divine affection. Thus, different cultural locations of Korean Confucian readers present multiple possibilities for



interpreting the story of Abraham not just as a story of *Hyo* but also as reinforcing additional Confucian values.

A Korean Christian may also interpret Abraham as being like an honorable Confucian man who does not speak about his emotions. From Western perspectives that value honest communication about one's emotion and situation, the silence of this father would seem to be a sign of obliviousness and lack of caring. However, Abraham's behavior fits the category of an honorable Confucian man who values hierarchy, order, loyalty, and respect in the name of *Hyo*. Therefore, the character of Abraham does portray well the typical Confucian father's role, so that many Confucian fathers can identify Abraham's role in this story with their own stories.

As in the *Hyo* folktales, there is a strong reinforcement of the glorification of the elder in the story of Isaac's sacrifice. There is no acknowledgement of the *Han* and *Jeong* of grandparents, parents, and children. Most *Hyo* folktales are stories about children's sacrifice for their grandparents led by their own parents. Therefore, the agency of grandparents and children of *Han* and *Jeong* is ignored in most cases. There might be stories of parental sacrifice for their children in other types of folktales, but most *Hyo* folktales are stories for the elders. Therefore, in reality, we may create a different story. A grandmother may sacrifice her life for her grandson. Adult children sacrifice their lives for their own parents. A little child suffers together with the suffering of parents and family. In these possible stories, there are threads of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* in human dynamics. There is a complexity of authority, suffering, and connection. *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* are always mixed together, coexisting as important aspects of Korean psychic reality. There are multiple possibilities for stories of sacrifice and filial piety.

Still, in our deep psyche, there is the highest value of serving the desires of the elder, the one with power and voice, who is usually male, which means sacrificing the young, powerless, voiceless, and female. This raises questions about reading and teaching this Bible story to modern Korean Confucian Christian families who may have very diverse, nontraditional situations in their lives, such as families with a sense of equality between genders, single-mother families, parents who are conscious of having experienced abuse from their own parents, parishioners whose experiences with their own pastors were abusive, and women who have been abused by men in positions of authority. With no dissection of the historical influence of the patriarchal nature of this story, it will simply replicate the message of traditional *Hyo* folktales, glorifying male power, and/or create unwanted and confusing messages about God's compassion for us.

However, this story is not just a story of *Hyo*. It is a story of *Han*, too. Although the concept of *Hyo* is most evident in this story, if we read in-between the lines, there is hidden the pain and suffering of each family member. First of all, the father who loves Isaac the most does not express his pain in this text. If Abraham does not express any pain and suffering verbally, does that mean that Abraham does not care about Isaac's well being? In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard considers the suspension of ethical duty by Abraham. Does he really stop being ethical in order to follow God's command? In discussing Abraham's story, Kierkegaard addresses the individualistic and paradoxical aspects of faith. Sometimes, individual actions on behalf of faith are not identical with universal ethics. Abraham's action is not considered immoral and it is not universal. However, his action in faith is right in terms of his faith. In any case, the nature of faith is

paradoxical in relation to universal ethics.<sup>245</sup> Abraham's action in the story is not ethical but it can be considered faithful.

Similarly, his decision and action do not entail that he does not suffer inside. In Korean culture, from a Confucian perspective, the story of Abraham implicitly expresses the *Han* of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. No matter how filially pious they are, sacrificing Isaac as a way to show trust in God is inhuman. However, this inhuman demand is made by God, and Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac all play their passive roles in following God's demand, just like the characters in *Hyo* folktales. People understand that serving the highest norm of *Hyo* is the best role they can play, and thus Abraham's family is right to fulfill God's command, despite the extreme sacrifice and suffering it entails. Thus, the story of Abraham is literally portrayed as a story of *Hyo* done by Abraham's family, but it is really not only of *Hyo*, but also of *Han* and *Jeong*.

Jae Hoon Lee shares the Korean legend of the famous Emille Bell in Korea, which has some similarities to the story of Abraham. Let us look at this story.

During the Silla Kingdom, the devout Buddhist Queen Sunduk (Good virtue), wanted to make a huge bell as a sign of the people's dedication to Buddha. In return, Buddha would then protect the nation from foreign invasions. The bell was to be placed in the nation's Buddhist temple in Kyungju. The Best bell maker was appointed by the Queen to build the best bell in the world. He did everything right but failed to make the bell produce the finest sound. He then consulted the religious leaders appointed by the Queen. They felt that a pure young maiden should be melted into the bell in order to produce the finest sound. By the order of the Queen, soldiers went out to fetch a pure young maiden. On a poor farm village deep in the mountains they found a mother who held a child. The soldiers took away the child, who was crying, "Emille, Emille (Mother, Mother)." The child was thrown into the melted iron that became the bell. Afterward the bell produced

---

<sup>245</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, "Problem I: Is There a Teleological Suspension of the Ethical?," in *Kierkegaard: Fear and Trembling*, ed. C. Stephen Evans and Sylvia Walsh, trans. Sylvia Walsh (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 58-59.

the sweetest and finest sound. The name of this bell came to be known as the bell of Emille, because the beautiful sound ends with “Emille, Emille, Emille (Mother, Mother, Mother).” It is the sound of this child who calls her mother. The mother who hears it cries. The sound of the Emille Bell then, is the voice of *han*, the *han* of Korean women and children, that is the *han* of *minjung*.<sup>246</sup>

While this story is similar to the story of Abraham, it may be a story of *Hyo* presented by the obedience to the Queen by the soldiers, the mother and the bell maker. However, this is also a story of *Han*. Unlike the passive and unemotional characters in the story of Abraham and the story of *Sansamhyoja*, here there is a weeping mother and a crying child. Here the mother’s agony is evident after her young daughter was sacrificed. The highest norm is *Hyo* and serving the desires of the powerful, so that some people become marginalized and become “the other.” Living people’s pain becomes the object, portrayed as less important than *Hyo*. Yet the story of Emille depicts the pain of a mother’s broken-heartedness, also called *Han*. Yul-kyu Kim claims that the story of the Emille Bell can be considered a protest against the tragic practice of infant sacrifice.<sup>247</sup> The bell’s sound, *Emille*, should be heard as the voices of thousands of babies sacrificed in the name of religious devotion or national security. The cries of the sacrificed baby can be heard as a protest against all kinds of social, political, and religious human sacrifice. This *Han* of mothers and children, and possibly fathers and other family members, is the pain of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. This is the pain of Abraham, who could not express his vulnerability to Sarah; of Sarah, who had to support Abraham despite her agony; and of

---

<sup>246</sup> Jung Young Lee’s translation in *An Emerging Theology in World Perspective: Commentary on Korean Minjung Theology* (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-third Publications, 1988), 155-156. Cited by Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of The Inner Wounds-Han* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 146-147.

<sup>247</sup> Yul-kyu Kim, *The Ore of Han and the Stream of Won* (Seoul: Joowoo, 1981), 149. Cited by Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of The Inner Wounds-Han*, 148,

Isaac, who was not told he was to be the sacrifice, but who probably knew something was not right based on non-verbal communication and his family members' anxiety. Without adding this dimension of the real pain of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac, this story is simply considered a story of *Hyo* for the powerful, the elder, the male, and the blessed ones.

This story is also a story of *Jeong*, which is the Korean way of connection, both healthy and unhealthy connection. Specifically, *Jeong* can be defined by the lack of identification and differentiation of, or empathy for, each family member's self apart from the family self as a unit. This seems to be negative from Western sense of independent self but it is also culturally appropriate. Like most *Hyo* folktales, the story of Abraham can be read as revealing *Jeong*. For example, Abraham is the only one who makes the extremely difficult decision to sacrifice his child. He does not ask his wife's opinion. Even if he is a strong patriarch and the head of the family, this is a lonely position in which to be. As the wife, Sarah is supposed to abide by her husband's decision. Therefore, as in the *Sansamhyja* story, the mother and child are silent. This may be interpreted in different ways, but one of the reasons for this silence is because that is how they are supposed to relate within the family unit according to their culture. In other words, family members are not divided, especially in relation to an outside crisis; thus, the father, as the head of family, acts for the family, and the wife and children do not have a role to play except that of non-opposition to the father. In Confucian culture, there is a different nuance to this situation. The mother, Sarah, from a Korean Christian reader's perspective, is silent but not totally excluded. Sarah is silenced and excluded in terms of verbal participation, but she is included in terms of Koreans' awareness that the Korean family is one unit. This undifferentiated way of relating with one another within

the family means that family members cannot speak up for the things for which they need to speak up. In the patriarchal family system, eventually this undifferentiated and connected way of being and relating disempowers and silences women and children. Therefore, Sarah loves her son Isaac, but she cannot or is not allowed to speak up; Isaac loves his parents but he is not allowed to share his thoughts and apprehensions; Abraham was raised to believe that as the male head of the family, he is not supposed to share some things with other family members, for the sake of protecting and loving them.

Re-reading Genesis 22:1-19 from a culturally-located perspective that includes the three lenses of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* gives us a more culturally-attuned interpretation of the Bible. It is similar to but different from traditional interpretations. The story of Abraham is not just a story of testing Abraham's faith. It is a story of *Hyo* for Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. It is a test for the whole family. It is also a story of *Han*. This story implicitly depicts the pain of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. Silenced pain is common in traditional Korean families. However, this silenced suffering is cared for by silenced *Jeong*. This story is a story of *Jeong*. Sarah might know the plan, whether Abraham shares it or not. She, as a member of one family unit, could feel it or know it. Yet, she will not interfere with Abraham's decision. Here is Sarah's ambivalence. She already understands the pain of Abraham and she does not want to burden him more. However, like the pain of *Emille's* mother, she suffers and cries silently. In order to glorify her family honor for *Hyo*, she suffers silently in the name of her love for Abraham and Isaac. This imagined frame of reference may belong to traditional, male-centered Korean family systems. What I have presented is the perspective of a traditional Korean and Confucian family. In this section, I make an attempt to highlight the difference of Genesis 22:1-19

when we are aware of Korean cultural traditions of *Hyo*, *Han*, *Jeong* from a Korean Christian perspective. If one lives in Korea and is embedded in these three kinds of Korean cultural traditions, the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac can easily be understood as a story of *Hyo* because of the prevalent culture of *Hyo*. However, if we are more attuned to other Korean cultural traditions of *Han*, and *Jeong*, this story can be much more enriched in terms of each character's dynamics. This enriched Korean cultural addition for the interpretation of the Bible can diversify the meaning of this biblical story. This diversified meaning of the Bible might bring a diversified understanding of Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. I will add more of my theological imagination for a new biblical interpretation at the end of this chapter.

#### Becoming a Different Story in a Different Culture

In terms of the discussion above, what if a traditional Korean Confucian Christian comes to the United States and reads Genesis 22:1-19 again as an immigrant parent? Or as an immigrant child? Are there any different possibilities for interpretation? As an educational pastor in a Korean immigrant church Sunday school classroom, one day, after studying this passage, I heard one of my elementary Sunday school students raise the issues she had with the text:

Pastor Kwon, why does the father try to kill the child? Does he hate him? Where is the mother? Why doesn't the father explain what he was told by God? Well. This is really nonsense. If I were Isaac, I would run away, and I would never see my parents again. And I would hate them.

Why would this girl ask these questions? How did she dare to ask them within a Korean Christian context? How could I answer those questions without blaming God, Abraham, Isaac, or Sarah, these people who are known as the family of origin for the Christian faith?

Continuing to reflect on this experience, I wonder what led this young girl to her particular questions and comments about the story of Abraham. What is different for her as a child growing up in the United States as compared to me, who grew up in Korea? Drawing upon the generalizations made in Chapter Two regarding differences in social and cultural influences on children in the two countries, maybe she has developed more self esteem than I had as a young girl. Maybe she is more attuned to the role of the mother in a family crisis. Maybe she expects her parents to engage with her verbally as an equal family member. I wonder, is she familiar with the culture of *Hyo* folktales, as I was at her age? Without the socially structured internal framework of *Hyo*, can I still accept the story of Abraham as a story of *Hyo* and a good example of faith?

In light of these questions, I will imagine how a Korean Christian immigrant family would interpret the story of Genesis 22:1-19. This imagination will help the metaphor of wearing three-dimensional eye glasses with moving seats. Abraham was an immigrant on a journey. As an immigrant, as a head of family, his relationship with God was important. Kierkegaard points out the critical importance of faith for Abraham because he left everything in his homeland. Kierkegaard sets the story in the context that Abraham is willing to emigrate from the land of his fathers to a foreign country so God can fulfill God's promise to make of Abraham's descendants a mighty nation.<sup>248</sup> If the reader perceives Abraham's immigrant status to be significant, how would this change the reader's understanding of this biblical text and its interpretation? Also, for Korean Christian immigrants who are in-between Korean cultural traditions and a dominant U.S. culture, how does this position impact how they use *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* to understand

---

<sup>248</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard: Fear and Trembling*, 14.



their lives, and how does it affect their relationship with the Bible? In the following discussion, I will imagine how immigration impacts a Korean Christian family's biblical understandings. Let's spin the seat!

To review points argued in Chapter Two, Korean Christian immigrant families face the following: issues of acculturation in family and in culture; cultural differences between Korean Confucian culture and the dominant U.S. culture; role changes for family members, including the parentification of children, a more disempowered father and a more empowered mother and children; pressure for gender equality among family members; the importance of the Protestant church as a main social support system, but also a space that creates a cultural gap between Korean ethnic culture and the dominant U.S. culture; and conflict between the Korean first-generation's immigrant culture and their children's culture. Other struggles and stresses related to immigration in general could be added to this list. Two quotes shared in Chapter Two illustrate the dynamics of many Korean Christian immigrant families. From a Korean immigrant mother:

My son used to be very obedient to me until he started going to school. He doesn't act like my own son any more. He forgets the Korean language and tries to speak English only. He puts me down because I am not fluent in English. On a rainy day, I brought an umbrella to school for my son. He got upset because I brought an umbrella for him. How can this kind of thing happen? This is not what I expected when I came to America for my son's education.<sup>249</sup>

From her child:

When I have problems, I can't talk with my parents. I hardly talk with my dad. He comes home late. But, it is OK. With my mom, I try to talk, but she does not understand what I am talking about. After I explain everything, she gives me a blank look. I talk with my friends about my problems because they understand what I am going through.<sup>250</sup>

---

<sup>249</sup> Young Lee Hertig, *The Cultural Tug of War: The Korean Transition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press: 2001), 50.

<sup>250</sup> Young Lee Hertig, *The Cultural Tug of War*, 50.

In the first statement, there is evidence of a mother's struggles for parental authority, a belief in children's duty to obey, children's faster acculturation rate, a parent's disempowered status, and different understandings of love and care. The child who is quoted reveals a perception of a mother's lack of ability to communicate, a lack of connection, different understandings about parental roles, and different ways of showing care and love. At the same time, both mother and son feel despair in not meeting their deep desires to connect.

In these confessions, I see issues related to the Korean cultural traditions of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* that are interacting in this parent-child dyad. The mother's expectation for her son's obedience can be perceived as the son's *Hyo*; the mother's deep despair over losing her connection with her son is *Han*; and the mother's way of loving and caring (bringing an umbrella), *Jeong*, is now challenged by a new cultural framework.

The son, on the other hand, wonders where he can find a support person when his parents are not available. His father is busy and physically unavailable. His mother is present but emotionally unavailable. He feels shame over his mother's expression of *Jeong*. The mother's way of loving and her son's expectations are now different, but there is no clear communication between the two. In the traditional Korean family system, it is assumed that the father will lead and guide the family, but in the immigrant Korean family system, the father's authority and presence decrease. The strong patriarchy fades. Each individual either gains more status and power, loses where they once stood, or lives in-between the two.

K. Samuel Lee asserts that Korean American families live in a reality between two conflicting value systems: that of Confucian cultures and dominant U.S. cultures.<sup>251</sup> To put it differently, Korean Christian immigrant families live with the psychic reality of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* in the midst of the individualism and egalitarianism that are prominent in U.S. culture. This means that Korean Christian immigrant parents, who are used to living in the highly respected and hierarchal role of parents, are being asked to move toward becoming more egalitarian parents; the gender-segregated parental roles, like *Eom Bu Ja Mo*, and the male-centered parent-child dyad, *Bu Ja Yu Chin*, are being shifted toward more egalitarianism in gender role expectations for both parents. The traditional Korean family system is male-centered, family-centered, and elder-centered, and this state of affairs is valued and reinforced in Korean Confucianism and Christianity. However, in the United States, families are asked to acculturate themselves from being male-centered toward practicing more gender equality, from being family-unit centered toward being more individual-unit centered, and from being elder-centered toward accepting a youth-centered culture.

In other words, as compared to the traditional Korean family system, women and children's rights are elevated, while male hierarchy fades. In each family, the individual unit is valued so that each individual has rights and a voice. The mother's and the child's rights become more valued than they are in the traditional Korean family system, and the Korean father seems to lose power. Traditionally, respect for the elder, represented as *Hyo*, is the highest cultural value, but in the United States, the rights of the child are also

---

<sup>251</sup> K. Samuel Lee, "Navigating between Cultures: The Bicultural Family's Lived Realities," in *Mutuality Matters: Family, Faith, and Love*, ed. Herbert Anderson et al. (Lanham: Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 107-118.

important. In reality, most Korean immigrants struggle to adjust to their life in a new land. Most immigrant parents work long hours in order to survive. This means that, given the social support for women's and children's rights, women have more financial capital, which provides a means for empowering their voices but also can threaten the power of their husbands.

From a Korean Christian immigrant family's perspective, the following version of Genesis 22:1-19 may sound unusual compared to what the parents might have been taught in Korea. Coming from varying cultural traditions, this story will be understood in different ways by each family member. If Korean Christian families perceive the story of Genesis 22:1-19 as a story of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*, then the effects of immigration to the United States will create a version that is quite divergent from the traditional Korean telling of the story. This new version will reflect the diverse individual needs and perspectives of family members and the changes in power in parent-child and husband-wife relationships, changes in gender roles, and changes in understandings of caring behavior.

Genesis 22:1-19 could be interpreted as a story of *Hyo* for Korean parents. As discussed before, *Hyo* is a culturally prevalent and deeply embedded value in not only Korean culture but also Korean Christian culture. Children are raised with the teaching of *Hyo*, and no one challenges or debates the acceptance of child sacrifice represented in cultural stories. Therefore, Christian obedience to God is naturally acceptable to the minds of Korean people as a way of practicing *Hyo*. So, like Abraham and Sarah, many Korean Christian immigrant parents leave everything in Korea and sacrifice a lot for their families and children. God's demand to sacrifice Isaac sounds painful, but they have a

frame of reference that says obedience to God leads to blessing, and faith in God must be a priority over saving their child.

According to Segovia, in the Bible the life of ethnic minorities is a “struggle.” As an immigrant, Abraham is an ethnic minority; his life is symbolized as a struggle, and yet he continues his journey as a sign of faith in God’s promise. Thus, Korean Christian immigrant families whose lives are in a state of struggle can identify with Abraham and Sarah and also continue on in obedience to God, keeping their faith in God’s promise.<sup>252</sup> As indicated in my earlier discussion of Segovia, each discipline approaches scripture with a different emphasis. For example, as Segovia puts it, historical criticism sees the text as means, literary criticism sees it as medium, cultural criticism as means and medium, and cultural studies sees it as a construction.<sup>253</sup> My intent is not to categorize my work according to these disciplinary divisions. My point is that culture shapes the message of the Bible so that it is interpreted differently in various contexts.

If Korean Christian immigrant parents hear Genesis 22:1-19 as a story of *Hyo*, then how do their children hear this story? Following the lead of my Sunday school student, let us put ourselves in the situation of a Korean Christian immigrant youth who is struggling to find her or his own voice and figure out her or his parents’ way of showing love and living in a foreign land. There is not enough connection or communication. Your level of trust in your parents has been diminished.

Now listen to this biblical story from this youth’s perspective, which is not informed by having grown up in a culture of undisputed *Hyo*, but by living in a culture of

---

<sup>252</sup> Fernando F. Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies*, 175.

<sup>253</sup> Fernando F. Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies*, 11-33.

struggle and undefined adventures. Having been uprooted and forced to travel a long distance to a strange place and having experienced ambivalence and confusion along the way, the youth now hears a story of another child who has to undergo unexplained travel with a father who suddenly attempts to kill the child, while the mother is absent. This is a story of horror. It is a story of abuse, and it is a story of trauma. No matter how much blessing Abraham can pass down to Isaac, Isaac's undefined, unexplained, and unhealed trauma is something for which Abraham, Sarah, and God can be held responsible by the child. The unexplained and sudden decision made about a child's life becomes the child's *Han*. This is another Emille story. To make things worse, in this story, there is no mourning, no healing, and no response as to what happened to Isaac.

This is a story of horror and trauma for an immigrant child. Also, this is a story of a mother's *Han*. It is similar to the common story of a mother like the silent Sarah, who has been silent and obedient in Korea. Now, just as things change radically for Sarah after the process of immigration, as an immigrant in the United States, Korean mothers are asked to function as an income provider as well as a homemaker. The mother struggles with her own adjustments to her new immigrant life: her new roles as a wife and wage earner, new pressures to understand her disempowered husband, her disempowered role as a mother, the slightly increased power of her financial capability, and her desire to connect with her husband and children in the midst of the harsh realities of daily life. Suddenly, one day her husband wants to sacrifice their child in the name of God, whom they must trust and lean on in their life in the wilderness of immigration. This becomes the immigrant mother's *Han*. I have shared the Korean Christian's perspective on this story, and now I partially share the possible perspective about this

Bible story from a Korean Christian immigrant youth perspective. What I try to highlight is that the different cultural locations influence the interpretation of the readers' understanding of the Bible. Also, I again point out that the Korean Christian immigrants' cultural location is important for their understanding of the Bible. Therefore, I would like to create a new story from my theological imagination with interrelating values of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* for an imagined Korean Christian immigrant family.

The Korean Christian immigrant family is on a journey of negotiating between their Korean Confucian culture of *Han*, *Hyo*, and *Jeong* and dominant U.S cultures. One of the difficulties for Korean Christian immigrant parents and children is a lack of a shared sense of *Jeong* as a symbolic way of showing love and care. For example, in the traditional Korean family system, if parents do not have direct communication, then there is still a common understanding that parents show their love through certain behaviors and acts of care in their lives.

The mother's story cited earlier provides an example that is helpful for discussing understandings of *Jeong* and its practice in U.S. culture. In Korea, there are four seasons, and it rains often during the summer. Children and youth go to school by themselves, usually by walking; no parental supervision is required. If it unexpectedly begins to rain, then mothers frequently go to their children's schools and wait with umbrellas. If a child's mother brings an umbrella for her, the child feels the depth of her mother's *Jeong*, and the child is happy she brought the umbrella. The child does not ask for the umbrella, but her mother seeks to care for her needs and shows her love through her behavior. This is a common occurrence that most first-generation Korean immigrants would recognize

as an example of parental *Jeong*. Taking an umbrella to school for one's child does not have to be explained as a demonstration of *Jeong* to most Korean people. This is a way of caring that is embedded in most Koreans' minds and Korean novels, stories, and mass media.

When I first came to Southern California ten years ago, I had a related experience. One day it began to rain, so I hurriedly tried to find my umbrella in the car. I did not want my child to get wet, so as quickly as possible I got my umbrella ready. However, at the same time, I looked out the window, and there was a high school student who was just walking in the rain with a happy smile on his face. Although the rain was not heavy, I was curious about why he was walking in the rain without any protection. I asked one of my U.S. friends about this. She said, "I don't know why that student didn't use an umbrella, but I can think of some possible reasons. In California, the weather is so dry and hot most of the time that when it does rain, some people just want to enjoy it. And, for teenagers, it might be a matter of looking cool, not to use an umbrella." I still do not understand the culture surrounding umbrella use in Southern California. There might not really be one. However, when I read the vignette of the conflict between the Korean immigrant mother and her child over an umbrella, "umbrella" came to symbolize for me the conflicting understandings of parental care and love between immigrant parents and children.

Due to different cultures and expectations, immigration impacts parenting a great deal. An important thing to understand is that expressions of parental care and love can be perceived as painful by immigrant children. For example, as discussed in Chapter Two, children often feel like they are forced to go to church by their parents. However, parents



feel they are supporting and caring for their children by placing them in a faith community. As immigrants, parents want to depend on and develop their relationship with God, and they want their children to experience these blessings, too. But this dynamic is frequently not understood clearly by parents and children. Therefore, in the name of love, parents compel their children to go to church, while children feel a lack of adequate parental support for their freedom as individuals. The story of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac in the Bible might be portrayed as a story of parents showing their *Jeong* to God the parent, as well as a story of *Hyo*, where the parents expect to be blessed for exercising their duty to God. However, this story can also be perceived as portraying a lack of *Jeong*, that is, pain, suffering, and trauma.

Here is the sad reality of immigrant families. Due to undefined cultural influences, like *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*, parents may make decisions or behave in ways that confuse or hurt their children, so that, eventually, both parents and children are unable to feel positive and connectional *Jeong*. The nature of *Jeong* is especially based upon a family unit's sense of self. *Jeong* values collectivism and family first. *Jeong* also values time spent together and cohesiveness, rather than justice and direct verbal communication. Therefore, in the acculturation stage, immigrant families' ways of loving and caring can be lost, confused, or misunderstood.

Yoon Sun Lee reports some particular difficulties Korean immigrant families have in relationship to isolated living, on the one hand, and strong ethnic cohesiveness on the other. Lee also identifies their major life stresses, especially cultural differences between them and their children regarding parenting, educational pressures, and language

barriers.<sup>254</sup> Along with these specific barriers and obstacles as immigrants, parents and children both experience difficulties in finding their own support spaces and resources. Therefore, for immigrant families, parent-child relationships seem to be much more important than these relationships in Korea, where both parents and children can easily find other support systems. However, due to cultural differences and the lack of support systems to mediate Korean Christian immigrant parents' and children's acculturation processes, their relationships silently suffer, and they develop their own narratives of *Han* because they have no shared spaces for supporting their own ways of being loved.

In the midst of changes in an immigrant family's situation, there are identifications that can be made with the story and characters of Genesis 22:1-19. In a traditional Korean family system, the passage will easily be interpreted as a story of *Hyo* that empowers their faith development and encourages a close relationship with God. Now, however, as an immigrant family, this story is a story of *Han* for Isaac and a story of *Hyo*, *Han*, and/or *Jeong* for Abraham and Sarah. Each individual now has the freedom to interpret biblical stories in multiple ways and is individually responsible for interpreting the Bible for her or his daily life. Therefore, acknowledging cultural differences can increase the significance of culturally-based biblical interpretations.

For Korean immigrant families who heavily depend on their Protestant church communities for support, it is critically important to discuss how perspectives on biblical stories will vary from person to person, from parent to child, and, according to the years since immigration, how fast the acculturation rate is, how much gender perspectives have

---

<sup>254</sup> Yoon Sun Lee, "Korean Child Rearing Practice in the United States: An Ethnographic Study of Korean Immigrants in the Cultural Transition" (Ph.D. diss., The Faculty of the School of Education International and Multicultural Program, 1999), 105-117.

changed, etc. As in going back to the three-dimensional movie with moving seats, it is time to check each individual's experience from their own cultural location. It is not the same experience—watching a 3-D movie with 3-D glasses from a moving seat and watching a movie with no moving seat. And think about it. What if the speeds of the seats are all different and sometimes there is an unnoticed change of the movie scenes from two-dimensional to three-dimensional? It will all be a fun experience, if it is expected like amusement park entertainment. However, it will be a very disorienting, frustrating, and extra-terrifying experience if the person does not know where she or he is located. Therefore, for the sake of Korean Christian immigrant parents' and children's relationships, it is essential to realize how one's cultural location impacts biblical interpretation; this is critical to liberate parents and children from their immigration experience. Moreover, it engenders the question: How do the unique cultural locations of family members relate to differing interpretations of the Bible?

#### A New Story with New Culturally Interrelating Values

I would like to suggest imagining that everyone is equipped and guided to use interrelating values of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* for reading the Bible story Genesis 22:1-19 as a Korean Christian immigrant family. What would happen?

The cultural tradition of *Hyo*, *Han* and *Jeong* could be used as resources for Korean Christian immigrant families. The healthier the use of authority and mutual relating that takes place, the greater the possibility of developing a new *Hyo* culture in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. This would mean positively reframing the experience of *Han* and exploring how to transform the experience of *Han*

as a way to develop one's authentic power for vulnerability. For Authentic *Jeong*, the emphasis is on more justice-oriented care and more self-differentiation among family members.

In order for Korean Christian families to try to live with the values of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*, I will imaginatively re-tell the story of Genesis 22:1-19 from the perspective of these inter-relating values. My intention is not to fix or change the scripture passage, but rather it is to read between the lines from the stance of the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship that I imagine having these inter-relating values. I would like to imagine one family of Korean Christian immigrant parents and child whom I can imagine as a contemporary version of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. What will happen if such a Korean Christian immigrant family lives with these inter-relating values for their challenging immigrant life? What happens if they read Genesis 22:1-19 from the perspective of their inter-relating values?

I will start my imaginative construction of the story of one immigrant family who has the same names of Abraham the father, Sarah the mother, and Isaac the son. Going back to a 3-D experience, this is the immigrant family that lives with Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* on their immigration journey.

Scene 1: God's Command (The Same Reality That Abraham Faces in the Bible):

One day, Abraham is told by God to sacrifice his only child. Abraham is concerned about why God has commanded this. God does not usually talk in details. But Abraham trusts God because God has given him great blessings and protection throughout his life. He also understands that Sarah, who has shared her whole life with him, will understand God's directive. Yet he feels very sad and distressed about following God's command. He talks to Sarah and discusses God's instructions with her the night before. Sarah and Abraham burst into tears and share how much they trust God, as well as how much they feel sad about following God's command.

Scene 2: Abraham's Sharing of God's Command with Sarah (Mutuality in Couple Dyad):

Abraham and Sarah talk about the value of following God's command as the greatest priority in their Christian faith. However, they also do not want their child to suffer alone. They call Isaac and share with him what God has directed them to do. Sharing this news with Sarah and Isaac takes a lot of courage from Abraham. He was raised with the teaching that a strong man does not cry and does not show weakness before his family. Yet he remembers how much he had suffered from his own childhood, wondering about what was going on his parents' lives and how he had passively followed all the decisions they made, which caused him later to rebel and act out against them. He also remembers how many times his mother suffered alone when his father made a decision and left the rest of the family powerless and helpless to do anything different.

Scene 3: Abraham and Sarah's Agreement to Share God's Command with Isaac (Mutuality in Family):

Abraham takes courage and shows his love for Sarah and Isaac in a different way than his father had done with his family. His heart trembles, and Sarah cries. Abraham and Sarah both take a long pause before opening their mouths, but eventually they open up and start to share their story with Isaac.

Abraham begins, "Isaac, this is one of the most difficult times in our life. We want to say how much we love you. It is a very sad moment for both of us to share this news with you. You know how much we love you. Tomorrow, we will leave on a trip and go to the mountain called Moriah to worship God. Please prepare your backpack, and early in the morning we will leave."

"Why do we have to go on this family trip? Did something important come up?" Isaac asks.

"Yes, this is a very important event. However, it will be okay." Sarah answers.

Scene 4: Family Trip to Mt. Moriah (Shared *Han*, *Hyo*, and *Jeong*; Shared Mutuality, Vulnerability, and Authenticity):

Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac all wake up early in the morning and leave their house. Isaac falls asleep along the way, as Abraham and Sarah deeply feel the pain of what they are about to do.

"Why has God asked me to do such an inhumane thing?" Abraham thinks.

"Should I stop this nonsense now? Should I talk to Abraham?" Sarah asks herself silently.

"Can I really kill Isaac with my own hands?" Abraham wonders, with a feeling of horror.

"How can I save Isaac? Should I make him run away when Abraham takes a rest?" Sarah thinks.

Isaac sleeps on as Abraham and Sarah mulls over their situation, frequently expressing their inner struggles with audible sighs.

Scene 5: Arrival at Mt. Moriah (Shared *Han*, Shared *Jeong*, Broken *Hyo* for God):  
Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac all arrive at the mountain.

"Where is the place for worship? And the lamb for a sacrifice?" Isaac asks.

Sarah and Abraham start weeping in pain before Isaac. Isaac wonders what is wrong. Sarah and Abraham share the command God has given them. They also share how afraid they are and how much they feel responsible. They say that they can not follow God's command on their own will because it is so difficult.

"Isaac, we cannot do this to you. We know that God has a reason for asking this. However, we cannot do it," Abraham said, and the three of them weep together.

Scene 6: Long Silence at Mt. Moriah (Shared *Han*/ Vulnerability, Expressed *Han*/Vulnerability):

Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac all weep for a while. They do not know what to do. Their minds are whirring. Isaac is very afraid, and Abraham and Sarah are also afraid to lose God's faith in them.

Scene 7: Isaac's Lonely Thoughts (Expressed *Hyo*/ Expressed Mutuality):

Isaac thinks that his parents loved him very much. He also realizes that his parents are being challenged by God's command to kill him. He does not comprehend why God wants him to be killed. On the other hand, he understands, based on the story he has been told all his life, why his parents find it important to obey God. He has been told that God gave him as a miracle child to his parents. Without God's power, he would not have been born. He knows how God has protected and loved his family. Isaac also thinks about how Abraham and Sarah has struggled throughout their lives. He keeps thinking how painful his parents' situation is and wondering why God wants him killed. He becomes angry at God and starts to blame God for this situation. After a while, he thinks that he wants to talk to his parents. He wants to ask his parents what they are thinking and feeling. He makes a very important decision.

When he begins to reflect, he keeps thinking about the possibility of praying together to God. The God of love, the God of justice, would listen to their prayer.

Scene 8: Isaac's Request to Pray to God (Expressed Mutuality/ Authenticity):

Isaac tells his parents that he wants to pray together to God. Sarah and Abraham have been discussing how they can figure out what to do in this situation. They agree with Isaac and decide the three of them will pray about their situation.

They all pray together with the loud sounds known as *Tonsung Gido* (a Korean way of praying out loud in unison). They all shout and pray to God, asking God's guidance in dealing with this situation. They all release their deep emotions in *Tongseong Gido*. Isaac does not feel comfortable in joining this style of prayer but he understands about his parents' way of yearning for connection with God. He listens to his parents' loud praying with shared pain and he prays with unstoppable tears.

Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac all pour out their *Han* in order to fulfill their *Hyo* to God. They pray with their whole hearts, bodies, and minds with their deep sense of *Han*, *Hyo*, and *Jeong*. Their vulnerability, mutuality, and authenticity have all been displayed in their discussions, travel, and prayer and in this moment as they cry out for an authentic relationship with God, who makes an unbearable demand on this family. After all this praying, Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac all want to sacrifice themselves as a burnt offering. Abraham, as a father, Sarah, as a mother, and Isaac, as a miracle child, now are all ready to sacrifice themselves, their lives, for their family and for God.

They all cry.

Scene 9: Isaac's Initiation to Sacrifice Himself (Practice of *Hyo*, Practice of Mutuality):

"Mom and Dad, as a miracle child, my life was given by God. I don't want to sacrifice myself. I don't want to disobey you and God, either. However, I don't know what to do now. God will only accept me as an offering, right?" Isaac queries.

"Well, God only wants you, but I had better die for you. I cannot let you die," Abraham says.

"Since I am the life-giver for Isaac, then I am the one who should be sacrificed," Sarah argues.

Their discussion continues, and continues, and continues.

Their questions about God's command continues, and continues, and continues.

Their feelings are not pleasant, or comfortable. But their connection is deepened, and they all are feeling secure about their unity as a family and feeling worthy as individual family members who have a voice and rights.

Their sleepless night is painful in regard to facing God's unbelievable demand, but it is secure in regard to the family's zest and connection.

Scene 10: Abraham and Sarah's decision making (Practice of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*):

After taking time together to foster family connection, finally both Abraham and Sarah makes a decision that he has to be a filial son even though he did not want to give his young child as an offering. Abraham and Sarah believe that God desires their absolute obedience rather than Isaac's life itself. Instead of killing Isaac, both Abraham and Sarah wants to ask for their community's support. They both feel they need the support from their pastors and friends, and experienced people.

Both Abraham and Sarah contact their faith community which includes many wise people experienced at interpreting God's revelations. The pastor is informed about their family's situation and the pastor contacts other wise and experienced people with the permission of both Abraham and Sarah. In the meantime, Isaac feels supported by the time together with extended community. He stops feeling so isolated and felt greater support for his parents, too. They started by sharing both Abraham's and Sarah's requests for sacred wisdom and intercessory prayers. Through their intercessory prayers, everyone in the community cries out their pain, love, and ambivalence about their faith and obedience in God. They cry out their *Han* of uncertainty. Isaac watches and prays together with them. Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac feels connected, comforted, and cared for by their family connection and their community's support. Nobody has a clear answer because it is such a challenging test. The community members are pained but feel more connected with the pain of Abraham's family. After they all cry and pray, Abraham said to the community:

"I will sacrifice myself. I want to be a filial child of God, but I cannot sacrifice Isaac, God's son, by my own hand. Killing is forbidden according to the Ten Commandments; therefore, I will sacrifice myself. I don't know what way is right

and what way is sinful. But, this is how I will show my faith and obedience to God. Would you please pray for this decision?”

After Abraham’s decision everyone cries. They all understand how he wants to be biblically faithful and obedient. He has to follow God’s command but he couldn’t disobey God’s other commandment as found in the Bible. He cannot kill or become a violent father or husband. A pastor initiates one more *Tongseong Guido* about Abraham’s decision.

They all cry, touched by Abraham’s faithfulness, and pour out their sadness about losing Abraham soon. Also, they all wonder in what way Abraham can sacrifice himself without disrespecting the biblical lessons.

After their wholehearted prayers, tears, and community connection, the Holy Spirit comes and touches the hearts of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and the whole community and say, “A People to Gather for Abraham. Here I am.”

“Do not do anything to him. Now I know how much you all respect my law because you do not think only about saving your son, but you try to be obedient to follow my law. And you didn’t see Isaac as just your son. You tried to protect Isaac because he is my precious child, too. So, I will not ask you to kill your son anymore because you passed this difficult test. Now this community will be blessed by me, and this will be a place of blessing.”

#### This Story Ends, But Is Open for a Multitude of Possible Endings

This story is no longer just a story of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. This is a story for any immigrant or any family who faces struggle in their life’s journey. Now this story can be a story of the Kim and Choi and Park. Abraham can be a mother in a real situation. Sarah can be a father. Isaac can be sons, daughter, or daughters. There might not be both parents. There may be only one single parent. There might be a very young child who cannot join this mutual participation.

I can imagine one possible scenario in which a Korean Christian immigrant family reads the Bible with interrelating values and makes an attempt to live out the daily challenges of their immigrant lives with such interrelating values. Given their decision to immigrate, it is not possible simply to replicate their own culture in a new land; it will be more realistic and helpful if they dream of a transformative integration of their traditional culture with their new ways of living and their new ways of thinking, for the sake of their



liberation and empowerment as immigrants. I do hope that this new way of interpreting the Bible with a value of cultural importance will increase possibilities for marginalized Korean Christian immigrant families. As is the practice of many feminist theologians, interpreting the Bible from a marginalized perspective brings liberation to such persons. For example, as I indicated earlier, in the new interpretation of Tamar by Chung, she is not a victim anymore. She is now a survivor. Similarly, a Korean Christian immigrant family's multicultural living adds another possibility for diversifying their understanding of biblical stories and how they relate to their daily life. From a postmodern perspective, I add one more small truth to the world. Claiming a different human reality is claiming a small truth out of a grand world. Therefore, highlighting the value of adopting cultural influences within biblical interpretation and diversifying the meaning of the Bible stories based upon the experiences of humanity gives meaning and enriches the value and the importance of the authority of the Bible in the lives of marginalized people. Then, people can read the Bible from their cultural locations which include *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*, rather than as if they were a foreign Jewish family living 2000 years ago. They can connect Abraham's story with their own situated locations, and that possibility increases the likelihood for empathy and empowerment in their daily lives.

In this way, this kind of biblical interpretation can be empowering and liberating for those facing the challenges of multicultural living, specifically for Korean Christian immigrant families. Now their struggles for holistic living in a multicultural milieu can add to their experience of connection by using the Bible as an important source for life.

This story is a story of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*. This has become a story of Mutual Respect, a story of Transformative Suffering, and a story of Authentic *Jeong*. Korean

Christian immigrant families have different degrees of interrelating values. Therefore, this story might end in various and multiple ways. I do not close the possibility of new endings or new beginnings. However, I want to open the possibility of re-reading the Bible from one's own cultural location and re-living such value in one's daily life. In this way, the Bible can be reborn as a living authority for Korean Christian immigrant families.

### Conclusion

I have reviewed the Korean Christian immigrant family's different cultural locations and the way in which they might influence the biblical interpretation of Genesis 22:1-19. If one sees Abraham as the authoritarian human father who is obedient to the authoritarian Father God, then this story can be read as patriarchal, oppressive, and supportive for people who have power over their family members. This story then becomes a story of *Hyo*. If one focuses on the pain of each character in this story, this story becomes a story of *Han*. If one focuses on the fused connection among God the father, Abraham, and Isaac, this story becomes a story of *Jeong*. However, the story can be shifted and mixed when each family member's cultural location is different, because of different acculturation rates. Therefore, this story can be interpreted in different ways—either as a very oppressive story or a story of human complexity and ambiguity.

Therefore, I use Genesis 22:1-19 as an example of a patriarchal story that can be transformed into a culturally attuned story for the Korean Christian immigrant family. Also, I add interrelating values of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* as a resource for the Korean Christian immigrant family to develop a growth-fostering connection within the family. This connection is not merely toward

comfort and pleasant feelings; rather it requires painful sharing of the truth on the part of both parents and children. It requires the Korean Christian immigrant family to go beyond their comfort zone. However, it gives them a sense of security, sense of worth, sense of zest, the capacity to talk more honestly, the capacity to be close both physically, emotionally, and spiritually with one another, the capacity to use weakness as a way to open to each other, and the capacity to share their love through words, actions, and emotions. This is the connection that I am dreaming of for the Korean Christian immigrant family. This is the dream that I found by reading the Bible from a multilayered perspective out of our own cultural locations. It might sound idealistic or syncretistic or unrealistic. However, do we have any road map for a Korean Christian immigrant family's connection? If not, let us try.

This chapter indicates the importance of a Korean cultural location for a Korean Christian immigrant family's reading, re-reading, and living their lives through lessons of the Bible. Therefore, culturally appropriate biblical interpretation is suggested for Korean Christian immigrant families who choose to live with interrelating values of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*. This chapter raises a question about whether the value of a multiplicity of the biblical interpretations is appropriate, and how this multiplicity can be theologically understood. Asserting another creative possibility of the biblical interpretation can disempower one master theory or one grand biblical interpretation; however, the need for such a metanarrative is mostly based on Western theologians' views and is derived from their epistemology and anthropology. Thus, this way of biblical interpretation in multiplicity will create a chance for

empowerment and liberation of marginalized and silenced Korean Christian immigrant families' lives and may become a norm for reading the Bible.

In Chapter Five I will point out the theological and psychological value of multiplicity in order to empower the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship. I will explicate the benefits and challenges of multiple images of God and self as well as multiplicity in self and in our images of God. By normalizing the multiplicity of self and God, I will set up a basis for multiplicity in parenting styles that Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships may be normalized as one of multiple parent-child relationships. At the end, I will utilize the interrelating values for fostering Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships through dialogue with three leading American pastoral theologians who have expertise in family issues. This conversation will add further layers of insight for connection within Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. In Chapter Six, both Korean and American pastoral theological reflections will be discussed in an effort to construct applications of this feminist pastoral theology of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

## Chapter 5

### Theological Reflections on Multiplicity for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

In this chapter, first I argue the benefits and challenges of multiplicity as a theological and psychological value for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Providing theological and psychological aspects of multiplicity from a postmodern theological and psychological view normalizes multiplicity in terms of our multiple images of God and their possible influence in multiple images of parenting styles. Second, I use a theology of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* as a way to show multiple images of God that influence our parent-child relationships. Third, I reflect upon Korean American theologians' discussions of multiplicity in Korean American life and self understanding. Fourth, therefore, I assert the inevitable reality of multiplicity in self, family, and images of God for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Last, in order to deal with the challenges and benefits of multicultural living for the Korean Christian immigrant family, I provide pastoral theological reflection, in dialogue with three leading U.S. pastoral theologians, to further illuminate the three interrelating values of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*. This dialogue with the three theologians' interrelating views enriches the helpful aspects of the views and suggestions in Chapter Three, and adds a diverse theological view for a feminist pastoral theology to connect with the discussion of Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships in Chapter Six.

#### Why Multiplicity? Benefits and Challenges

Postmodernism challenges all totalizing discourses—such as those offered by science, religion, and political theory. It questions the inevitability of human progress. It

validates small, particular, partial truths out of the realization that knowledge can only be fragmented, and incomplete. It argues that what has been claimed to be neutral and universal truth is, nonetheless, particularized and partial.<sup>255</sup> Postmodernism rejects any normative claims, but especially those by First World Western scholarship, and it especially values world views that have emerged from the experiences of two-thirds of the world under imperialism, slavery, colonization, and marginalization. This focus on marginalized voices from two-thirds world people brings out the importance of the social construction of all knowledge. Also, this gives importance to fluid, multiple identities that can be influenced and constructed by multiple and changing sociocultural contexts.<sup>256</sup>

Because postmodernism values particularity, there is no single definition of what postmodernism is. Feminist pastoral theologian Pamela Cooper-White lays out the necessity of postmodernism for her pastoral theology of care. She lists her postmodernist presuppositions—six in all. First, she recognizes that rationalism is not sufficient in its capacity to fully understand what is essential for all living beings. Generally, rational forms of comprehension have been seen as superior to all other epistemologies. However, this presupposition emphasizes that every view is constructed, limited in its own cultural, linguistic, sociological, political, and historical horizons.<sup>257</sup> Second, the concept of objectivity is no longer convincing because human bias is such an inevitable reality. There is no neutral, unbiased, or objective knowledge. Knowledge is always someone's

---

<sup>255</sup> Emmanuel Y. Lartey, *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2003), 11-38.

<sup>256</sup> Emmanuel Y. Lartey, *In Living Color*, 39.

<sup>257</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *Many Voices: Pastoral Psychotherapy in Relational and Theological Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 13.

culturally, socially, and politically biased observation and interpretation. All research and communication involve interaction between the observed and the observer.<sup>258</sup> Third, truth, fact, and discovery are not seen as universal to all people; truths, facts, and discoveries held by people are conditioned by a certain set of circumstances and assumptions held by the group. Fourth, therefore, truth and fact are socially and culturally constructed knowledge.<sup>259</sup> Fifth, all truths must be evaluated in light of the particular context out of which they arise. Their generalization to other contexts must be explicitly questioned and evaluated in light of other truths that may already exist in these other contexts. Sixth, often unnamed emotional values of every truth must be recognized. Every truth has some association with emotions; "Truths that invoke fear, in particular, must be evaluated in terms of who most benefits by making others fearful. Fear enslaves, while hope liberates."<sup>260</sup> Claims to truth should encourage, empower, and embolden, more than they inspire fear. Depending on whose truth is being asserted, differing emotions will be evoked from different people. However, postmodernism is not a total deconstruction of all values into radical relativism. This postmodern theological view was

born in the crucible of disillusionment with ideals of progress in the light of war and the unintended consequences of technological "advances" and having inherited much of the intellectual heritage of nineteenth-century "critical theory," carries its own—perhaps too little acknowledged—social and political ideals, and therefore holds much in common with Black, feminist, and two-thirds-world theologies of liberation (although these do retain more of a "grand narrative").<sup>261</sup>

Postmodern philosophical challenges of all-totalizing discourse need not introduce absolute relativism, but should claim the truth for people who have been disempowered

---

<sup>258</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *Many Voices*, 14.

<sup>259</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *Many Voices*, 14.

<sup>260</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *Many Voices*, 16.

<sup>261</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *Many Voices*, 16.

and silenced by the assumption of neutrality, universality, and truth. Postmodern perspectives do not aim for only incomplete and partial truth. Rather they aim for incomplete, partial, and contextual truth, which has been underrepresented. I agree with and share Cooper-White's six presuppositions for postmodern theology, in connection with my aim of creating theological reflection to strengthen healthy connection in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

Because postmodern perspectives include partial, contextual truth, they presuppose the value of multiplicity. Cooper-White bases her postmodern theological anthropology on the notion of multiplicity. She notes that Freud's structural model, with its three components of ego, id, and superego, already recognized multiplicity in the human person.<sup>262</sup> Cooper-White similarly asserts the value of multiplicity in humanity, even at the level of the individual self. In order to address her focus on multiplicity, I will first consider her theological anthropology, which will benefit Korean Christian immigrant families. (I will discuss the benefit of a postmodern theological anthropology for Korean Christian immigrant families later in this chapter.) She asserts that on the basis of Genesis 1:26-27, verses that state that humanity is created in God's image, human experiences can be understood theologically as God's invention. She also cites 1 Cor. 13:12, which conveys the message of human existence as God's partial representation on earth.<sup>263</sup> She notes that the early Celtic Christians supported the theological idea that the ordinary experience of everyday life is a source of both relationship to and revelation about God. If this is true, ordinary human life is a glimpse

---

<sup>262</sup> Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and Id," in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1989), 631-645

<sup>263</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *Many Voices*, 37.



of God's image. Therefore, this everyday human life is a representation of God's image, and partial, incomplete, and everyday human experience is all part of God's representation. On these biblical and historical bases, Cooper-White suggests nine characteristics of humanity: 1) human beings are part of creation and creation is good, therefore human beings are good; 2) human beings are vulnerable; 3) human beings are embodied; 4) human beings are both alike and unique; 5) human beings are intrinsically relational; 6) human beings are multiple, but unitary; 7) human beings are mutable, fluid, and in process; 8) human beings are loved beings; and 9) creation is loved by the creator.<sup>264</sup> She asserts that human beings are all good and loving even though human beings are vulnerable, multiple, and fluid. Human beings are changing in the process of their life journeys. She also asserts that human beings are "vulnerable, fragile, easily wounded, confused, and tempted by the complexity of the world, and susceptible to straying away from our own highest good."<sup>265</sup> This implies that human beings yearn for wholeness. Thus, Cooper-White conceptualizes humans as both good and weak, able to become sinful and violent. Cooper-White's understanding of theological anthropology asserts that human beings' vulnerability and their existence as a whole is loved by God.

In light of the biblical assertion that humans are made in the image of God and the theological argument that, therefore, everyday human life is a representation of God's image, Cooper-White's theological anthropology implies that seeing humanity is seeing God. In other words, understanding humanity and its multiplicity in the individual self implies the multiplicity of God. She focuses on the Trinity as one image that suggests the

---

<sup>264</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *Many Voices*, 39.

<sup>265</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *Many Voices*, 39.

fluidity and multiplicity of God.<sup>266</sup> Contemporary philosophers and theologians have challenged orthodox theism, which claims that scripture and nature verify that God is One, omnipotent, omniscient, unchangeable, and impassible (unfeeling, unsuffering, impervious). Postmodern discussions challenge traditional assumptions about God and explore the possibility of the multiplicity of God, refuting the totalizing use of metaphors of God as the One (the one, holy, awesome God of our fathers; God of our nations; God of our reign only; God of our football team; God of our side). Under this critique, the exploration of alternative metaphors of God's multiplicity breaks up old visions about God, and opens more opportunity for other visions and voices.<sup>267</sup> Thus, postmodern theology opens the door to the possibility of understanding our ordinary life as a source of our theology concerning the multiplicity of God, so that our particular and local human existence and voice are now seen as valuable theological resources that possess authority. As Cooper-White points out the value of our everyday life story as an important theological resource for postmodern theology, so also the value of multiplicity expands our understanding of God. She uses the notion of God's multiplicity to frame an approach to pastoral theology and care.<sup>268</sup>

Process feminist theologian Catherine Keller also points out the importance of multiplicity in order to eradicate gender inequality. Addressing gender equality is an important part of contending with issues of intercultural injustice. Based on the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, Keller contends that new understandings of self and the world are needed to overcome separation and sexism. To that end, she proposes

---

<sup>266</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *Many Voices*, 76.

<sup>267</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *Many Voices*, 79.

<sup>268</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *Many Voices*, 67.

the following four conceptual dyads: 1) being one/being many; 2) being public/being private; 3) being body/being soul; and 4) being here/being now. These four categories bring together complex rhythms out of which connective and fluid selves compose themselves and their worlds.<sup>269</sup>

Like both Cooper-White and Keller, pastoral theologian Mary Clark Moschella first asserts the usefulness of multiplicity as a theological value. She also critiques the potential challenge of multiplicity. She suggests that the theological value of multiplicity is very helpful for Western Christians who do not easily see their own cultural biases in their theologies. Theological multiplicity can function to show that all theologies are words about God, and are not themselves God or Godself. Multiple images of the divine can relativize any one image or concept, helping to de-center the faithful and offering much needed perspective.<sup>270</sup> From her standpoint, multiple images of God are helpful for people who cannot easily open their eyes to see beyond their own cultural, social, and theological assumptions. She pinpoints the Western Christian because Western Christianity has been dogmatized as a center for many centuries. I also want to add that it is helpful for Korean Christian immigrant families, whose social contexts are multiple and who are not much aware of their multiple social, cultural, and theological assumptions for their daily living and practice of faith. I will discuss this later in this chapter. In this regard, multiplicity is a helpful concept for most people who are not very conscious about their way of thinking and their embedded assumptions.

---

<sup>269</sup> Catherine Keller, *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism, and Self* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 5.

<sup>270</sup> Mary Clark Moschella, *Living Devotions: Reflections on Immigration, Identity, and Religious Imagination* (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications, 2008), 174.

However, Moschella also addresses challenges of multiplicity as a theological value. She shares her concern that some will oppose this theological concept as idolatry. Especially, people who value totalizing truths about God, humanity, and self may resist accepting this multiplicity and its subsequent postmodern theology and theological anthropology. As a pastoral theologian, I agree that this needs serious reflection. A pastoral theology has to do with real people in contexts. If something bothers their well being and care, it is a serious issue. This is a very serious theological consideration for Korean Christian immigrant families, too. Most Korean Christian immigrant families attend Protestant evangelical churches and, thus, their view of their faith and theology are likely to come from a totalizing view of God, such as God being seen as totally omnipotent or totally unchanging. Therefore, the notion of theological multiplicity would likely be challenging for them. They are likely to resist the value of multiplicity. But Moschella does not lose her hope of using theological multiplicity as an empowering and liberating theme if people's lives can be actually changed in a constructive way. For example, for such people, it will be much more effective if we can argue the value of multiplicity from a biblical perspective. Once this multiplicity is embedded in what Moschella calls our "living devotion," this devotion can orient people to practice their love of God and neighbor in new ways; eventually practice will lead to fidelity to the value. Eventually, as Jesus preached in the Sermon on the Mount, "You will know them by their fruits."<sup>271</sup> In other words, Moschella values multiplicity in devotions, and she suggests the real fruits of the embedded value of multiplicity are created in people's devotions. These practices can change, empower, and liberate persons from rigid

---

<sup>271</sup> Moschella, *Living Devotions*, 175. She refers to Matt 7:16.

concepts of totalizing theological mono-values. Therefore, whoever wants to think about the value of multiplicity in working with people who might have resistance, Jesus' teaching about the importance of the "fruit" of beliefs can be considered wisdom for thinking about the applicability of the notion of multiplicity. This point strongly relates to Korean Christian immigrant families—who will likely experience initial resistance to the value of multiplicity, especially in images of God, but might be persuaded if its practice yields good fruit.

In summary, pastoral theologians Cooper-White and Moschella, and process theologian Keller, explore theological values and challenges of multiplicity. They see the importance of the social construction of knowledge, the importance of sociopolitical and socioeconomic location, the recognition of the complexity of human reality. Also, they see the limitations of rationalism and claims to objective truth, and argue that emotions are associated with truths. Moschella suggests the challenge of idolatry, as well as offering pastoral and concrete guidance regarding how to deal with resistance to the values we have been considering. These observations are all helpful insights for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

#### Multiplicity and Health for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

In addition to theological benefits and challenges, is multiplicity helpful for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships' well-being? From a postmodern psychological perspective, I would like to point out the benefits of multiplicity for relational health and well-being. First, we must emphasize the difference between what is popularly called "multiple personality disorder" and healthy embodiment of multiplicity. Multiple personality disorder, now called "dissociative identity disorder," refers to a state

of illness, as identified by mental health professionals. Thus, multiplicity in relation to personality traditionally has been assumed to be pathology, not as a source of healthy formation of self. By way of contrast, S. Steve Kang argues that second-generation Korean young adults have what he refers to as a "multivoiced" sense of self, due to their radically different and multiple social conditions in Korean cultures and mainline U.S. cultures. Kang affirms that traditionally the multivoiced self, or multi-personality self, has been understood as a disorder.<sup>272</sup> He argues, however, that multiplicity is not always pathological. How can the Korean young adult multivoiced self, developed and necessary to function in her/his multicultural reality, be a kind of pathology? If multiplicity can refer to an illness and to a necessity, what is the difference between the two, from a postmodern perspective?

Kang's argument uses Watkins's belief that disorder exists when there is no imaginary dialogue between a person's multi-voices or multiple personalities.<sup>273</sup> This process of mutual articulation is a distinctive process in which invisible guests or characters become not only autonomous but also more highly specified and discrete in their identities. Watkins posits four valuable aspects of each character's development: animation of each character; articulation of psychological properties of the character's development; clarification of the perspective of the character; and specification of identity of the character.<sup>274</sup> Therefore, while in pathology there tends to be only the

---

<sup>272</sup> S. Steve Kang, "The Socioculturally Constructed Multivoiced Self as a Framework for Christian Education of Second-Generation Korean American Young Adults," *Religious Education* 97, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 88.

<sup>273</sup> Mary Watkins, *Invisible Guests: The Development of Imaginal Dialogue* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum Associates, 1986), 1-4. Cited by S. Steve Kang, "The Socioculturally Constructed Multivoiced Self as a Framework for Christian Education of Second-Generation Korean American Young Adults," 89.

<sup>274</sup> Mary Watkins, 1-4. Cited by S. Steve Kang, "The Socioculturally Constructed Multivoiced Self," 89.

monologue of each character, a healthy form of multiplicity of character exists when these multiple dimensions of self endeavor not only to co-exist but also to converse harmoniously, as in the imagery of actual persons coexisting and conversing harmoniously at a round table.<sup>275</sup> This is a valuable affirmation of the development of multiplicity in sense of self for second-generation Korean American youth, or immigrant parents, or any people who are dancing with multiplicity in their sense of self. With the fact of multiplicity in the self, a monologue of one character might be a sign of pathology. However, admitting all the voices and characters within the self, striving for balance and cohesion amid the multiplicity—this can be argued to be an aim for healthy development of the self. By extension, we can affirm that inviting multiple images of God, parenting, and self to interrelate with *Hyo, Han, Jeong*, mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity—intentionality in building this interrelationship can contribute to our healthy self and relationships. It is a task for us to balance these different voices and parts of ourselves. It is our task to name all those parts of ourselves, parts of our images of God, parts of the images of parents and children—and create an on-going dialogue inside and beyond ourselves and families.<sup>276</sup> This internal and external dialogue will be an organic process of becoming, accepting, and living with whom we are as multiple selves.

Second, let us consider dissociation from a postmodern perspective. Watkins asserts that there is cohesiveness among multiple aspects of the self. However, Cooper-White argues further that the dissociation or fragmentation in our mental process can be a normal mental process. She notes that dissociation can be a more organic process,

---

<sup>275</sup> Mary Watkins, 1-4. Cited by S. Steve Kang, “The Socioculturally Constructed Multivoiced Self,” 89.

<sup>276</sup> Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 42-63.

occurring naturally as consciousness moves across a web of mental states and contents.

Cooper-White describes consciousness as “a multiply organized, association-linked network of parallel, coexistent, at times conflicting, systems of meaning attribution and understanding.”<sup>277</sup> Within this existence of multiple levels of human mental states, dissociation is no longer regarded as necessarily pathological, solely as the outcome of trauma. Cooper-White cites Phillip Bromberg:

The process of dissociation is basic to human mental functioning and is central to the stability and growth of personality. It is intrinsically an adaptation talent that represents the very nature of what we call ‘consciousness’... There is now abundant evidence that the psyche does not start as an integrated whole, but is nonunitary in origin—a mental structure that begins and continues as a multiplicity of self-states that maturationally attain a feeling of coherence which overrides the awareness of discontinuity. This leads to the experience of a cohesive sense of personal identity and the *necessary illusion of being ‘one self.’*<sup>278</sup>

Therefore, first of all, multiplicity can lead to disorder when there is a lack of internal and imaginary dialogue of each character. From this perspective, multivoiced Korean immigrant parents and children are not necessarily pathological. They are more often representing well the multiplicity of their internal voices in relation to the multiplicity of their social contexts. Moreover, liberating and empowering the internal-external dialogue of our multiple images of God as well as multiple images of parenting styles could help parents to realize the risk of a pathological dissociative sense of self, and rather engaging it as a natural part of our selves. Therefore, starting a dialogue about

---

<sup>277</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, “Complicated Woman: Multiplicity and Relationality across Gender and Culture,” in *Women Out of Order: Risking Change and Creating Care in a Multicultural World*, ed. Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner and Teresa Snorton (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 10.

<sup>278</sup> Philip Bromberg, “Speak! That I May See You’: Some Reflections on Dissociation, Reality, and Psychoanalytic Listening,” *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 4, no. 4 (1994) : 517-47. Cited by Cooper-White, *Shared Wisdom*, 49. See also Bromberg, “Standing in the Spaces: The Multiplicity of Self and the Psychoanalytic Relationship,” *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 32 (1996): 509-35. Cited by Pamela Cooper-White, “Complicated Woman: Multiplicity and Relationality across Gender and Culture,” 10.



multiplicity within ourselves is theologically and psychologically helpful for formation of healthy Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships as well as a healthy Korean Christian immigrant self.

This reframing helps to liberate Korean Christian immigrants from a pathological sense of who they are, from feeling not normal, as they strive to function in dominant U.S. culture. Instead of focusing on the negative and trying to justify that dissociation is not pathology, Cooper-White asserts that multiplicity of self is normal, natural, and organic, representing multiple layers of human internal states. She strives to liberate us from naming dissociation as pathology. Renaming the power of multiplicity theologically and psychologically will be a basis of my argument for the value of multiplicity in a healthy sense of formation of Korean Christian parent-child relationships.

#### Multiplicity Among Our Images: Multiple Images of God

In a previous section, I have shown the importance of multiplicity for truth claims for marginalized people. At the present time, there is still little psychological, theological, or cultural analysis to identify and claim what the needs of marginalized people are. There are some feminist theological claims that there is a critical need for supporting and liberating marginalized Korean immigrants. However, there is not yet theological reflection on Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships, which is a very important topic for the healthy development of the Korean immigrant community in the United States. The theological value of multiplicity is helpful to create a theology of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Because this particular parent-child relationship has not yet been theologically addressed, this issue can be potentially important in terms of the majority of the Korean immigrant population

as Christians. Therefore, silenced and marginalized Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships are now an important theological issue from a postmodern theological perspective, and I would like to address why the theological topic of multiplicity in God and self, both implicitly and explicitly, is related to the understanding of the multiplicity of a parent and is helpful for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

The parent-child relationship has been an important topic in psychology from Freud to now. In Chapter Three, I described: the importance of the father, mother, and son relationship from the Freudian tradition; later feminist theorists and psychologists who describe their observations and reflections of the different development in boys and girls; and, later still, increasing attention to the importance of both father and mother for both boys and girls. Therefore, my argument allows no doubt about the importance of the parent-child relationship. In theology, human relationship with the divine is easily defined as a parent-child relationship, easily a father and son relationship. In Confucianism, the parent-child relationship originated from the father-son relationship. Here, I will not focus on the issue of the patriarchal nature of the father-son relationship throughout history. Rather, I will emphasize the importance of the parent-child relationship for one's healthy self-image. For example, pastoral theologian Carroll Saussy argues that women's positive self-esteem is strongly related to their God-image. In support of her argument, she uses Ana Maria Rizzuto's argument that a child's early interaction with parents or caregivers is a critical influence on the child's formation of the image of God.<sup>279</sup> Rizzuto points out that the image of God is introduced by early

---

<sup>279</sup> Anna-Maria Rizzuto, *The Birth of the Living God: A Psychoanalytic Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979). Cited by Carroll Saussy, *God Images and Self Esteem: Empowering Women in a Patriarchal Society* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 47.

caregivers, usually parents, through parents' words about God but also through the implicit messages of their care for the child. According to Rizzuto and other object relations theorists, children's internalized memory of parents plays a critical role in children's internalized self-image. Little children's internalized image of God may not be compatible with later ideas or education about God by parents, religious educators, or theologians.<sup>280</sup> Therefore, Rizzuto answers that a positive psychological formation of the image of God is important, and this importance could result in the formation of healthier parental roles later in life.<sup>281</sup> Based on Rizzuto's work, we can surmise that a child who experiences an exacting, threatening, and punishing father is likely to develop a similar representation of all authority. The child's reaction to authority takes the form of an unconscious representation of ultimate authority. To this child, the father is ultimate authority. She internalizes her bad father as her unconscious representation of God/authority.<sup>282</sup> In these ways, parent-child relationships and human relationships with God as parent are closely related.

Accepting the theological value of multiplicity could deepen this theological understanding about Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. What if, instead of a little girl experiencing a bad father that becomes her internalized representation of God and authority, she experiences a multiple, fluid, and changing father? Then, could she experience a multiple, fluid, and changing image of father like a father of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*? Could we imagine multiple, fluid, and changing images

---

<sup>280</sup> Anna\_Maria Rizzuto, *The Birth of the Living God*, 44-45. Cited by Saussy, *God Images and Self Esteem*, 48.

<sup>281</sup> Anna\_Maria Rizzuto, *The Birth of the Living God*, 44-45. Cited by Saussy, *God Images and Self Esteem*, 47-49.

<sup>282</sup> Anna\_Maria Rizzuto, *The Birth of the Living God*, 44-45. Cited by Saussy, *God Images and Self Esteem*, 47-49

from our day-to-day experience, within ourselves as parents as well as within our children? In many activities of our parent-child relationship, parental sentiments of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* are intertwined. Like the pressure of many parenting situations, parental vulnerabilities are expressed as authoritarian control over children, as described in Chapter Two. These intertwined images of parents' ways of relating with children could have an impact on children's internalized self-images. Therefore, naming parents' multiple, fluid, and changing images is a very important process for children's healthy formation of self.

From this aspect, multiple, changing, and fluid parenting images could be helpful if we can also reflect upon them theologically. For instance, according to the movement of claiming a truth for indigenous marginalized people from a postmodern theological perspective, this theological view values voices from the margins. Therefore, in Korea, there are also theologies of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*, which include culturally vernacular terms to liberate the importance of indigenous culture, both linguistically and theologically. A substantial discussion of the theological background of indigenous Korean theology is beyond the scope of this project. But, I will briefly discuss who utilizes Korean vernacular terms for their indigenous theology. Especially, I will introduce Korean and Korean American theologians who have been working on the theologizing of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*, a work which interests me most.

In Korean traditions, a theology of *Hyo* has been addressed by Korean theologians Kyun-yong Byun, Sung Bum Yoon, and Eun Sun Lee.<sup>283</sup> Kyun-yong Byun

---

<sup>283</sup> Kyu yong Byun, *God the Father* [Père et Fils] (Ph.D. diss, L'Institut of Catholique, 1973), 407. Sung Byum Yoon, 효 [Hyo] (Seoul: 서울 문화사, 1973), 117. Both are cited by Eun Sun Lee, “유교의 효

asserts that there is value in the Korean Confucian virtue of *Hyo* as an important theological theme, but he universalizes the virtue of *Hyo*, to both the human father-son relationship and the relationship between humans and God-the-father. He raised this initially as a cultural value, but he eventually created a grand, patriarchal theology. In the 1970s, Sung Bum Yoon formed a theology based on *Sung* (誠 one's true heart), another Korean cultural vernacular term, also strongly related to a theology of *Hyo*. Yoon believes that *Sung* is the starting point of the Confucian way and the Confucian core, which serves as the basis of *Hyo* and *In* (benevolence). Yoon asserts that Jesus Christ is the perfect example, who represents *Sung*, *Hyo*, and *In* in his life and his relationship with God the father. For Yoon, God-the-father-son relationship is necessary, and God's relationship with Adam is much more important than Adam's relationship with Eve. He continues that God the father's relationship with his son Jesus Christ is the core of the message. Therefore, both Byun and Yoon argue that the God-the-father-son relationship is the core of Christianity and needs to be highlighted. This relationship is well-addressed in the Korean indigenous culture of *Hyo*.

Thus, Byun and Yoon make attempts to universalize a theology of *Hyo* to reinforce the God-the-father-son relationship. This contextualization is meaningful in terms of claiming the cultural importance of seeing the theological message, and it highly esteems Korean culture from a theological perspective. However, from a postmodern perspective, both of these theologies still are universalizing and patriarchal in terms of only seeing the core of the biblical message as God-the-father-son relationship. A

---

원리와 기독교의 책임 윤리” [*Hyo* as Confucian Ethics and Christian Ethics of Responsibility], in 유교, 기독교, 그리고 페미니즘 [Confucianism, Christianity, and Feminism] (Seoul: Jisiksanupsa, 2003), 99.

feminist Confucian theologian, Eun Sun Lee, argues that both Byun and Yoon's theology of *Hyo* are patriarchal and contextualized in Korean cultural tradition, alongside patriarchal Western theological discourse. In contrast, Eun Sun Lee highlights a theology of *Hyo* as a theology of responsibility. She argues that a theology of *Hyo* that reinforces a traditional father-son relationship (*Bu Ja Yu Chin*) isolates women-related relationships, like mother-son (*Mo Ja*), mother-daughter (*Mo Nyo*), and father-daughter (*Bu Nyo*). Therefore, she wants to highlight the philosophical presupposition of *Hyo* in order to introduce a diversified parent-child relationship that could embrace more diverse forms of the parent-child relationship, instead of reinforcing the monolithic, patriarchal father-son relationship. She believes that *Hyo* is a theology of responsibility because *Hyo* presupposes a hierarchal relationship guided by a mature and responsible adult.

As I discussed in Chapter Three, the glorification of the parent and the elder is based not simply on the natural aging process but assumes a truly wise, mature, and exemplary adult. When the adult is exemplary, the authority of the parents and obedience to their authority can be a healthy form of power and a healthy basis for acquiescing to power. It is especially healthy when it guides immature children, for the sake of the children's well-being. From this perspective, the original notion of *Hyo* could serve as an ethic of responsibility for parents and adults, with regard to children. This could be a healthy model of authoritative leadership by parents, as compared to being authoritarian. Since it presupposes healthy parenthood or adulthood, a theology of responsible ethics or a theology for parents and adults starts with their self-cultivation, which should be a primary developmental task for adults who desire healthy parent-child relationships. Unless there is healthy parent self-reflection and cultivation, this *Hyo*-based, male-

dominant parent-child relationship can degenerate into exerting power over the child for the sake of the parent's needs, not the child's well-being. As we have seen over the years, such exercise of power can be abusive.

A theology of *Hyo* can be understood as a patriarchal, and universalizing, theology. Nonetheless, Eun Sun Lee struggles, in a dangerous dance between patriarchal theology and liberation, to not reject but reform the patriarchal aspects of the Korean Confucian Christian's living, so as to liberate them into a different level of authoritative responsibility and direct them away from an authoritarian use of power. The multiplicity within the understanding of *Hyo* is crucial for healthy relationship with one's parent and with God. A person can have a genuinely filial relationship with his or her parent, and God the parent, and still exercise that filial relationship in diverse, multiple, and changing ways. Therefore, a theology of *Hyo* is a way to represent, in the human parent-child relationship, multiple forms of authority—from abusive authoritarianism to healthy authority. This theological lens gives Korean Christian immigrant parents a perspective from which to think about the connections between their relationships with their children and their relationship with their image of the God of *Hyo* (authority), which can be useful for thinking about how to achieve a healthy form of authority.

Theologies of *Han* also demonstrate the prevalence of multiplicity; many theologians use the same vernacular term but there are nuances of differences in their theological assertions about *Han*. As I discussed in previous chapters, Minjung theologian Nam-Dong Suh defines *Han* as a lump in a Korean's spirit,<sup>284</sup> and feminist theologian Hyun Kyung Chung theologizes *Han* as Korean women's suffering for

---

<sup>284</sup> Nam-Dong Suh, *Minjung Theology*, 60. Cited by Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of The Inner Wounds-Han* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 139.

liberating their full humanity.<sup>285</sup> In addition, Susan Nelson and Andrew Sung Park attempt to show *Han* as a critical theological concern, by which a theology of being sinned against is a way to understand the double-edge of sin and *Han*.<sup>286</sup> In their view, understanding *Han* becomes understanding God's pain. Within Korean theologians' developing discourse about *Han* and suffering, Namsoon Kang criticizes Hyun Kyung Chung's theological approach for its collectivism and essentialism.

Kang argues that Chung's theological argument: 1) oversimplifies Asian women as victims and objects of suffering; 2) portrays Asian women as a homogenous group; 3) and views, inaccurately, Asian women as being only sufferers.<sup>287</sup> Kang points out that multiplicity and the fluidity of one's location must be considered in order to construct an Asian feminist theology from a postmodern point of view. The world is not locally governed anymore. The global economy is impacting almost all the world. Therefore, Kang points out that it is difficult to essentialize a grand theory of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation, because there are individual differences and a danger of canceling out the diverse voices through homogenization. In relation to understanding the Korean cultural concept of *Han*, viewpoints of both Hyun Kyung Chung and Namsoon Kang are beneficial. Kang's point is that it is mistaken to essentialize class, gender, and sexual orientation. However, as I noted in Chapter One, I support Spivak's argument that it is inevitable and, given marginalization, a necessary strategy to essentialize class, gender,

---

<sup>285</sup> Hyun Kyung Chung, *Struggle to Be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women's Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1990).

<sup>286</sup> Andrew Sung Park, *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).; Andrew Sung Park, *The Other Side of Sin: Woundedness from the Perspective of the Sinned-Against* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

<sup>287</sup> Namsoon Kang, "Re-Constructing Asian Feminist Theology: Toward Glocal Feminist Theology in an Era of Neo-Empire(s)," in *Christianity in Asia*, ed. Sebastian Kim (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).



and sexual orientation. In order for liberation of the marginalized people, I choose to agree with Spivak's use of strategic essentialism. But, for the argument of the theological value of multiplicity in liberating Korean parent-child relationships, I also support the positive theological value in multiplicity. This view seems to be paradoxical. But, I strategically essentialize the Korean Christian immigrant, then I also strategically support the multiplicity in Korean parent-child relationships for the benefit of empowering this marginalized group. For Korean Christian immigrant parents whose pain and suffering are pathologized by the views of parenting considered normative in dominant U.S. culture, I emphasize that the parent-child relationship must be recognized and valued as multiple, fluid, and changing.

For example, Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relational suffering can be described as *Han*. Andrew Sung Park writes at length about "the wounded heart of God," referring to various aspects of human suffering.<sup>288</sup> This suffering can be named *Han*, which originates from Korean history and culture. From this point of view, Korean Christian immigrant parents' suffering is *Han*, and it is one way to experience and live in the heart of God.

Just as it is important to understand Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships from the value of multiplicity, valuing multiplicity in one's suffering is likewise important. Even though a theology of *Han* can be used for Korean Christian immigrant parents, still the multiplicity in the experience of *Han* means that the suffering of Korean Christian immigrant parents is also changing and fluid. This is another way of

---

<sup>288</sup> Andrew Sung Park, *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).; Andrew Sung Park, *The Other Side of Sin: Woundedness from the Perspective of the Sinbed-Against* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

seeing that instead of pathologizing Korean Christian immigrant parents' *Han*, it can be theologically affirmed and potentially liberating. For example, the suffering of *Bu Ja Yu Chin Seong Jeong* can be a seed experience for developing parent-child affective bonding. In the immigration journey, suffering and *Han*-ridden experience can be a place for parents and children to meet, and also for human parents and God the parent to meet. It can be the place to develop an empathic parent-child relationship. In this way, Korean Christian immigrant parents' *Han* is not universalized, and theologically they are empowered for their growth and relationship with their children and God.

Last, there is a theology of *Jeong*, which has been addressed by Andrew Sung Park, Kyuhoon Oh, and Wonhee Anne Joh.<sup>289</sup> Kyuhoon Chung asserts that *Jeong* is a core Korean sentiment that has been developed as an important part of Korean people's intimacy. Andrew Sung Park argues that *Jeong* is "a compassionate passion" and a source for healing *Han*. *Jeong* can heal the wounded, the rejected, the discouraged, and the discriminated against.<sup>290</sup> Wonhee Anne Joh claims that *Jeong* can be understood theologically as describing the complexity and ambivalence of the heart of the cross of *Han* and *Jeong*. She, as a postcolonial feminist theologian, asserts that the cross of Jesus Christ is comforting, empowering, and hope-filled, while being simultaneously horrifying, threatening, suffocating, and contradictory. The cross is both empowering and horrifying, and in this way it is a resource for opening up the ambivalence and complexity of the

---

<sup>289</sup> Andrew Sung Park, "A Theology of Enchantment: Multiplicity in Self and Community," *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 13-33; Kyu Hoon Oh, "Reflections on Korean Sentiment of Chong and its Implication for Pastoral Care and Counseling," *목회와 상담* [Pastoral Care and Counseling] (Spring 2004), 99-125; Wonhee Anne Joh, *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006). Andrew Sung Park uses the transliteration *Jung*, Kyu Hoon Oh uses *Chung* [*Jeong*], and Wonhee Anne Joh uses *Jeong*. I use *Jeong* in this dissertation to refer all these different spellings of the term.

<sup>290</sup> Andrew Sung Park, "A Theology of Enchantment," *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 24-25.

divine.<sup>291</sup> As Joh discusses her ideas about the cross, using *Han* and *Jeong*, we can see how a cross has a powerful liberating energy and love as well as a powerfully destructive energy. It is both life-giving (like positive intimacy) and life-killing (like an unjust sticky relationship), and this valuable combination is like the value of the complexity of humanity in this postmodern age. The theological understanding of *Jeong* is a window to understand Jesus Christ's pain and love. A "heart of Cross" in *Han* and *Jeong* could imagine how powerful the Korean Christian immigrant parents' love for their children could be, and how painful as well. A majority of Korean Christian immigrant parents live their lives for their children's lives. However, the level of their struggle and suffering as immigrants reminds us of the complexity and ambiguity of parental love and suffering. This could be seen as similar to the heart of the cross.

As described above, the suffering experience of Korean Christian immigrant parents is the place where they can experience the wounded heart of God. Again, this place could be the place where they experience another heart of God, a heart of the Cross. This theological naming and claiming of Korean Christian immigrant parents' daily living can be powerfully helpful for their constructive relationship with their own selves and their relationship with God. Potentially, their healthy relationship with God can impact their relationship with their children. Therefore, this multiple heart of God is what most Korean Christian immigrant parents would feel from their experience of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*.

These are Korean or Korean American theologians who work on a theologizing of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*. These theologies all indicate a certain relationship with

---

<sup>291</sup> Wonhee Anne Joh, *Heart of the Cross*, 85-86.

humanity. Each emphasis has resulted in a particular historical, social, and political context. I will briefly address some insights they open up regarding Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. What I argue here is: what if all these theologies of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* happen at the same time in human parent-child relationships? In a more risky, creative, and imaginative way, what if these multiple relationships with human children of God and God of parents were to happen at the same time? Like the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac? Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac all struggle with their heartbreaking obligations and sentiments of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* in their test by God. I would dare to wonder if God would also feel a sense of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* with God's children Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac? Andrew Sung Park argues for the wounded heart of God; Wonhee Anne Joh argues for the heart of the Cross; Eun Sun Lee argues that God would feel a sense of authority and responsibility from God's heart of *Hyo*, a sense of suffering, broken-heartedness, and wounded heart, *Han*, and a deep connection, *Jeong*. When God feels the deep authority to train Abraham, a deep sense of suffering, wounded heart, and deep connection, would I be able to express this God's multiple, fluid, and changing heart as God of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*?

Furthermore, this analysis arises out of my culturally, theologically, and socially located imagination, as Cooper-White notes. Then, from a postmodern theological claim, our daily life is a representation, a revelation, of God's images. Then can we claim Korean Christian immigrant parents' daily experience of their struggle to locate their sense of authority, suffering, and yearning for deep connection as also similar to the heart of God, who has a deep sense of authority, deep suffering, and deep connection with us? Therefore, is their daily struggle to find a healthy sense of authority out of their

temptation to either abuse or neglect their power and authority? Sometimes, their sense of power and authority could be authoritarian. Other times, their needed sense of power and authority might be silenced and not used. Like any parent struggles to find a healthy medium for their use of power, could God struggle to find a healthy medium to use God's power and authority? God also may struggle to see human reactions as depending on different social, cultural, and theological locations. No matter how properly God uses power and authority, God's loving and healthy intention may not be understood if God's children differently understand the cultural situation. This kind of misunderstanding could happen in any relationship. However, this misunderstanding painfully happens, especially in a multicultural parent-child-relationship like the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship.

Many times in my pastoral experiences and clinical working with youth in Korean immigrant churches in the Los Angeles area, most Korean Christian immigrant youth do not feel their parents' love when the parents fail to share their affection openly with them. However, I have also been told by their parents that they try not to bother their sensitive and hardworking youth. Parents do share their love in not bothering their highly sensitive children. Parents tend to show their way of attuned care; children feel it as neglect and uncaring. This love story breaks my heart.

This struggle is not just a struggle between finding love in Korean cultural multiplicity from *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*. As I have discussed above, RCT (Relational Cultural Theory)'s three concepts of mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity also could be valued if these terms are theologically understood. When we think about a theology of mutuality, it is still in broad, multiple, fluid, and changing terms.

As I have briefly reviewed a different theological claim with concepts of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*, I will also briefly describe a theology of mutuality, a theology of vulnerability, and a theology of authenticity. This is how we view our image of God with a different name, and different focus.

A theology of mutuality has been addressed by many theologians. Mutuality models of Christian love are significantly informed by the *caritas* model of love associated more with the Catholic than the Protestant theological tradition; for example, the New Testament scholarship of Victor Furnish and Luise Schottroff agrees with this interpretation of Christian love.<sup>292</sup> In *Mutuality Matters*, practical and pastoral theologians such as Herbert Anderson, Edward Foley, and Bonnie Miller-McLemore address the value of mutuality for justice-love for the family; they also wrestle with unresolved questions in relation to mutuality: 1) because accommodation or sacrifice is inevitable in any human community, how can families ensure that it will be mutual and just? 2) how are relationships strengthened if justice is added to love at the core of mutuality? 3) what does mutuality mean across time and distance, when participants are parents and children, when fathers are absent, when parents should be honored, or within a violent context? 4) is it possible to have democratic families without mutual sacrifice? Can submission be mutual?<sup>293</sup> A theology of mutuality deals with mutuality in human interpersonal relationships and in human-divine relationships. A theology of mutuality can be contrasted and compared with a theology of *Hyo*. A theology of *Hyo* presupposes

---

<sup>292</sup> Victor Furnish, "Neighbor Love in the New Testament," *Journal of Religious Studies* 10 (Fall 1982):332; Luise Schottroff, "Non-Violence and the Love of One's Enemies," in *Essays on the Love Commandment*, ed. Reginald Fuller (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 23. Cited by Don Browning, *Equality and the Family: A Fundamental, Practical Theology of Children, Mothers, and Fathers in Modern Societies* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 96-97.

<sup>293</sup> Herbert Anderson, Edward Foley, Bonnie Miller-McLemore, and Robert Schreiter, eds., *Mutuality Matters: Family, Faith, and Just Love* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 5-11.

that there are values in hierarchical relationships. Similarly, a theology of mutuality presupposes values in mutual relationships. It is like the differences between an image of king and an image of friend. Admitting these different and multiple images of God will broaden our relationship with God, and this broadened relationship can be a role model for human interpersonal relationships. Therefore, God as king and God as friend can be manifested in one interpersonal relationship like the parent-child relationship. These multiple images of God can be helpful to name our changing relationship with our children as parents. Sometimes, we want to establish our authority over children, but also we want to become their friend. This is not pathological dissociation or multiple personality disorder. This is an organic part of our relationship with God as well as with our children.

A theology of vulnerability has been addressed by Dorothee Sölle, David Jensen, and Kristine A. Culp. In *Window of Vulnerability*, Dorothee Sölle emphasizes Jesus Christ's vulnerability as a power to heal the world. Therefore, as Christians, we should have a "window of vulnerability," which can lead us to have a stronger inward relationship with God.<sup>294</sup> Sölle points out Jesus Christ's vulnerability as a theological value for Christians. We should give up our privileges as Jesus Christ did. Sölle also points out Jesus Christ's window of vulnerability as a way to be closer to God. However, for many Korean Christian immigrants, their window of *Han* and vulnerability is both a way to the cross and a way to be tempted. It is like the dynamics of *Han* and sin. According to Andrew Sung Park, both sin and *Han* itself are causes of *Han* and they have a chain reaction. Sin is the oppressor and *Han* is the oppressed. The *Han* of the oppressed

---

<sup>294</sup> Dorothee Sölle, *The Window of Vulnerability: A Political Spirituality* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), xiii.

in its active mode can seek retaliation against the oppressor in a form that is often itself unjust. As a consequence, the vicious cycle of violence continues.<sup>295</sup>

Likewise, for many Korean Christian immigrant families, the window of vulnerability and *Han* both can be constructive to understand the pain of Jesus Christ and the cross. But, at the same time, this window of vulnerability and *Han* can be destructive to cause more *Han*, and sin, like the pathological dynamics of disconnection in many Korean Christian immigrant families.

In *Graced Vulnerability*, David Jensen explores a theology of vulnerability from the position of a child. Sometimes, we do not value children from a theological point of view. But, Jensen names children's vulnerability as an important theological value.<sup>296</sup> He sees children as vivid reminders of the gift of difference and human vulnerability, which is necessary for biological survival and subsequent growth. Children enflesh and help clarify some of the Christian understandings of the imago Dei that are focused on children, and the promise and peril that their lives entail.<sup>297</sup> Kristine A. Culp utilizes both the prophet Jeremiah's and the apostle Paul's thought on human vulnerability, expressed as an earthen vessel susceptible to being shattered and also capable of bearing great treasure, the grace and glory of God.<sup>298</sup> Then she claims vulnerability as a way to live before God as a Christian. Human living before God has been involved with themes of

---

<sup>295</sup> Andrew Sung Park, *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin*, 69-70.

<sup>296</sup> David Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability: A Theology of Childhood* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2005), 17-26.

<sup>297</sup> David Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability: A Theology of Childhood*, 32.

<sup>298</sup> Kristine A. Culp, *Vulnerability and Glory: A Theological Account* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 3.



reforming and resisting evils like idolatry and denial of human dignity.<sup>299</sup> She hopes resisting might eventually be a way of self-reforming for Christians.

*Han* and vulnerability represent the vulnerability of both human and God, and these theologians argue for the value of the vulnerability of both. God is vulnerable, and this vulnerable God saves humanity. In seeing the images of God as vulnerable, wounded, we are helped to connect to where our vulnerability and wounded heart impact us deeply. A theology of *Hyo* represents a strong and responsible God. A theology of mutuality represents a friendly God. Now, this theology of *Han* and vulnerability represents a weeping and hurting God. These multiple images of God give us multiple connections with God. Our partial understanding of images of God invites us to make holistic images of God.

As compared to a theology of mutuality and vulnerability, a theology of authenticity is hard to find in theological literature. The topic of authenticity appears mainly in discussions of scriptural authenticity. Charles Guignon introduces Heidegger's understanding of an authentic self. As an existentialist, Heidegger believes that life is a series of happenings, and authenticity in one's human existence fulfills the "ability to be" that is central to human existence. In others words, authenticity is a matter of "choosing to choose," that is, of making one's choices one's own and so being "answerable" or responsible for one's life.<sup>300</sup> Based upon this definition of authenticity, we can say also that authenticity is one's ability to choose to be in the moment. Theologically speaking, it is God's ability to be in the moment. Therefore, the Heideggerian understanding of

---

<sup>299</sup> Kristine A. Culp, *Vulnerability and Glory: A Theological Account*, 135-157.

<sup>300</sup> Charles Guignon, "Authenticity and Integrity: A Heideggerian Perspective," in *The Psychology of Mature Spirituality: Integrity, Wisdom, Transcendence*, ed. Polly Young-Eisendrath and Melvin E. Miller (London: Routledge, 2000), 62-74.

authenticity claims that the authentic self and authentic God have an ability to be in the moment and make responsible choices. God is able to be with us. This is an image of an authentic God based upon Heidegger's understanding. Daryl S. Paul writes about the value of a pastoral counselor's role to help clients find their own meaning, goals, values, and agency to be spiritually authentic from an existential perspective.<sup>301</sup> Similarly, Reinard Nauta asserts the importance of authenticity for ordination and profession of pastoral care. He stresses problems when pastors focus so completely on meeting the congregation's need that the pastor becomes inauthentic instead of being authentically who he or she is. Nauta's key point is the necessity for pastors to successfully maintain a healthy distance from the demands of others in order that the pastor can maintain authenticity.<sup>302</sup> These discussions about authenticity emphasize that it consists of one's ability to be in the moment, to make choices in line with one's responsibilities, and to maintain integrity in relationship to one's ordination and vocation even as one seeks to meet the needs of others.

At first glance, the values of authenticity seem in some contrast with the theology of *Jeong* as described by Wonhee Anne Joh. She emphasizes the ambivalence in *Jeong*, and hybridity of the heart of the cross, as both *Han* and *Jeong*. The emphases of the discussions above seem to prioritize clarity and minimize ambiguity. But they also seem to assume the value of being true to oneself, and from that perspective we can see that having the integrity to admit the ambiguity of one's *Jeong* could also be an expression of authenticity. We can imagine our relationship with God who is able to be in

---

<sup>301</sup> Daryl S. Paulson, "The Search for Spiritual Authenticity," *Pastoral Psychology* 55, no. 2 (2006): 197-204.

<sup>302</sup> Reinard Nauta, "The Performance of Authenticity: Ordination and Profession in Pastoral Care," *Pastoral Psychology* 51, no. 5 (2003): 425-431.

the moment with us, and who is able to have both *Han* and *Jeong* to embrace our mixed and combined emotions from our complex human reality.

What is the value of multiple images of God? We, all children of God, are exposed to many different images of God, as in *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*, as well as images of mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity. We are exposed to and challenged to learn of God's variety of characteristics, such as God's authority, suffering, and love. Many parents try to follow the way of God in their parenting and other aspects of living. However, in most Korean churches, God's many characteristics are not addressed and, instead, one image is predominant: God the Father is emphasized in most Korean churches. Korean Christian immigrant parents are not encouraged to have diverse and multiple images of God, to embrace the diversity within God, within our contextual need. We can claim a universal image of God, but that universal image cannot adequately meet our needs in our particular human contexts.

I am arguing that instead of trying to find God's right image and voice, we can accept various images of God as a given reality. Like our parents, those of us who are parents try hard to be loving, and caring, and authoritative, but we can be very abusive, and powerfully destructive. Sometimes, we can find this aggressive and violent behavior in biblical images of God. Without sufficient support, human parents find it hard to relate with these diverse and changing images of God. Children also find it difficult to relate with their changing, fluid and multiple images of parents. Children are lost in finding where to locate their relationship with changing parents.

What if we give permission to think of multiple images of ourselves and of God as normality within ourselves and within divinity? I do not mean to normalize multiple

personality disorder or incongruent images of God. However, postmodern theological anthropology gives us permission to explore multiple images of self, parents, and children, and God as a part of our normal humanity and of divinity. Therefore, instead of trying to preserve Korean cultural norms by insisting on uniformity, we could choose as an expression of our faith to acknowledge the reality of human multiplicity and multiple images of God. Theology is a representation of humanity. Therefore, contextually different images of self, family, and God will be diverse and multiple.

#### Parent-Child Relationships in Multiplicity

I have highlighted the value of multiplicity in God; there is also valuable multiplicity in parenting styles, too. In this globalized postmodern age, think about the life of the Korean Christian immigrant family from the perspective of multiplicity in parent-child relationships. As noted earlier, both parents and children experience different parenting styles, *Bu Ja Yu Chin*, *Eom Bu Ja Mo*, and *Bu Ja Yu Chin Seong Jeong* in Korean culture. *Bu Ja Yu Chin* is parent-child relationship (originally the term refers to the father-son relationship, though I have re-phrased it as parent-child relationship), *Eom Bu Ja Mo* (Strict Father, Affectionate Mother), *Bu Ja Yu Chin Seong Jeong* (Parent-Child affective bonding, originally translated as father-son affective bonding, though I have re-phrased it as parent-child affective bonding). Some important aspects from these Korean parenting styles are based upon relationality, mother's warmth, father's authority and discipline, and empathy. Parental hierarchy is presupposed.

Bonnie Miller-McLemore points out that popular psychology and parenting books commonly convey the message that children are seen as 1) victims, 2) sinful, and

3) gift.<sup>303</sup> Generally speaking, children are seen as dependent beings that need to be cared for by parents. Like these multiple views of children, parents' role to nurture children can also be dramatically shifted, for example, as narcissistically needy parents make children into victims.<sup>304</sup> Therefore, there is no simple parent-child relationship from Miller-McLemore's perspective. It is important to understand the multiple and complex nature of parent-child relationships.

My own review of parenting books finds that most see the parents as the main subject of the parent-child relationship, as compared to balanced attention to both parents' and children's needs, and recommend behavioral approaches.<sup>305</sup> They provide many different views of parenting that may actually confuse parents. For Christian parents, these books do not sufficiently address theology.

Briefly, what I want to note is that the multiplicity of parenting styles and our multiple, changing, and fluid identity can play together. In other words, even in the Korean Christian immigrant family, dealing with multiplicity in their self identity is significant work. Then, I have added another layer of multiplicity in parenting styles and images of God, which both directly and indirectly influence the parent-child relationship. Therefore, we really have to understand the value of multiplicity in pulling out all those different images and styles of parent-child relationship. Eventually, there cannot be only

---

<sup>303</sup> Bonnie Miller-McLemore, *Let the Children Come: Reimagining Childhood from a Christian Perspective* (San Francisco, Calif.: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 25-104.

<sup>304</sup> Bonnie Miller-McLemore, *Let the Children Come: Reimagining Childhood from a Christian Perspective*, 25-56.

<sup>305</sup> George M. Kapalka, *Parenting Your Out of Control Child: An Effective, Easy to Use Program for Teaching Self Control* (Oakland, Calif.: New Harbinger Publications, 2007); Tim Kimmel, *High Cost of High Control: How to Deal with Powerful Personalities* (Scottsdale, Ariz.: Family Matters, 2005); Timothy Smith, *The Danger of Raising Nice Kids: Preparing Our Children to Change Their World* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2006); Anthony E. Wolf, *The Secret of Parenting: How to be in Charge of Today's Kids-from Toddlers to Preteens-without Threats or Punishment* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000).

one certain style of parenting. It might be all multiple, changing, and fluid. For example, there might not be a fixed parenting style of *Eom Bu Ja Mo*. Both mothers and fathers can be both authoritative and caring. Or *Bu Ja Yu Chin* can be a father-son relationship or *Mo Nyo Yu Chin* can be a mother-daughter relationship. Without typologizing or categorizing, let the multiplicity, fluidity, and changing nature of our relationship be overflowing. In this way, we can disempower the normality of a parent-child relationship that possibly oppresses minority parents in their relationship with their children.

#### Multiplicity within Multiple Images

I have shown the value of multiple images of parenting, and of God, for Korean Christian immigrant parents. For example, I posited the value of multiple images of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*, mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity. Then, I also briefly mentioned the multiplicity within each image. Let us imagine that Korean Christian immigrant parents, children, and family are in multiple relationships with the God of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*, mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity. However, here I would want to add another important dynamic of the multiplicity of images of God, and parenting styles.

Let us imagine that Korean Christian immigrant parents and children might see a different face of God from each other if we are all created in God's image. Instead of being frustrated, dissolved, confused about this multiplicity of our different images about God, it could be an opportunity to explore a different image of God within our self. Does the value of multiplicity in self also imply the multiplicity of our images of God, multiple images of parents and parenting styles? For example, like the coexistence of the God of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* for one Korean Christian immigrant as multiple images of God, could there also be a coexistence of a mixture of parenting styles of *Bu Ja Yu Chin* or

permissive styles according to our postmodern theological anthropology? The existence of multiplicity in our multiple, changing, and fluid identity can engender many creatively multiple roles, relationships, images, and sentiments within ourselves and our relationships with our children, parents, and God. For instance, a theology of *Hyo* can be individually, culturally, and socially different. Each Korean Christian immigrant parent can practice a value of *Hyo* in parent-child relationships that can be different. Each parent-child relationship also can be multiple in terms of typology.

Therefore, in addition to validating the multiple images, we must ask: why is the multiplicity within us and among parenting styles, family, and images of God so important? Pamela Cooper-White talks about the value of multiplicity in women's identity and, by extension, other humans: multiplicity is a more “generous and apt description of women’s lives, and indeed a better metaphor for women’s hearts and minds than the logic of integration that pervades much of modern psychology.”<sup>306</sup> She points out the positive aspect of multiplicity as compared to a traditional notion of integrity. She uses the word “com/plicated (com-plicated) not only for multiple roles and relationships, but also for multiple internal states of emotion and identity. Just as it occurred in Abraham’s, Sarah’s, and Isaac’s multiple internal states of emotion in the time of God’s test for their faith, so also many Korean Christian immigrant families—who have to dance with their multiple roles, relationships, and internal states of emotions—need a helpful description of the value of multiplicity to name their life, relationships, roles, and identity in a multicultural society. Cooper-White asserts that because this embracing of multiplicity is both formed by a postmodern feminist pastoral

---

<sup>306</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, “Com/plicated Woman,” 9.

theology and psychology and resonates within it, it is passionately worth pursuing.

Multiplicity can offer new, more creative ways of conceiving of both self/selves and other(s) as we take up the challenges of living in today's pluralistic, postmodern world.<sup>307</sup>

I agree with the value of multiplicity as liberating and empowering the voice of marginalized people, which could be a new and creative voice.

This multiplicity in self, family, parents, and parenting styles can liberate and affirm the normality of parent-child relationships, or human relationships with God that are multiple, changing, and fluid parent-child relationships for Korean Christian immigrant parents. This liberation from an imposition of "normal" parenting styles gives freedom to Korean Christian immigrant parents to create their own parenting style depending on where they are in their acculturation stage, or their intimacy level, with new, healthy, and connecting parent-child relationships. Moreover, these new ways of being in relationship can be created and supported without being pathologized by the norms of dominant U.S. culture. Also, multiplicity in images of God can theologically empower our multiple relationships with our human family. God of the heart can be multiple, as we see it from the argument of Wonhee Anne Joh. And even more combinations of heart can be also discussed in the story of a newly-imagined Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac, like God as a parent with the heart of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*.

#### Multiplicity in the Korean Christian Immigrant Family

Korean American theologian Andrew Sung Park wrestles with a multicultural Korean Christian American identity. He criticizes the traditional acculturation model of the melting pot (amalgamation) theory which stressed the oneness of American society

---

<sup>307</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, "Complicated Woman," 21.



by obtaining a new identity through intermixing, while we lose our old ethnic identities in this new world. His "enchantment model" advocates a society of diversity in unity and unity in diversity. It supports the ethnic groups' need for separation without amalgamation.<sup>308</sup> Park opposes an amalgamation theory for multicultural ethnic identity, and instead he proposes a theology of enchantment for the development of a multicultural identity for Korean American Christians.

Park questions how the United States forms a multicultural, multiethnic, and multiracial society. In 1992, there was a critical incident in Los Angeles, California. It is known as the 4-29 uprising and was in response to a jury's acquittal of four police officers who beat Rodney King. In the course of the uprising, the image of ethnic conflicts and turmoil were highlighted. Park uses this historical moment to illustrate the importance of U.S. multicultural and multiracial living. Park considers identity as one of the core issues necessary for promoting healthy multicultural living. He utilizes a metaphor of the cross to illustrate the multicultural identity process.<sup>309</sup> He believes that the cross represents the death of our old self. Those who love to preserve the Korean American identity must forsake it, and those who forsake it can find their authentic identity. For Korean Americans, forsaking our outmoded identity means negotiating a new boundary by negating our old self that was negated by various oppressors. When we die to our group, Korean American Christians can spur Korean Americans to play the role of transformers in society. This is how Park uses the symbol of enchantment as a cross.<sup>310</sup> Park's new model of multicultural identity for the Korean American Christian

---

<sup>308</sup> Andrew Sung Park, "A Theology of Enchantment," 14.

<sup>309</sup> Andrew Sung Park, "A Theology of Enchantment," 19.

<sup>310</sup> Andrew Sung Park, "A Theology of Enchantment," 20.

will be a benefit in terms of his use of the symbol of the cross. He holds that the symbol of enchantment, that is, a dying old self becoming a new self, leads to a transforming process.

This process does sound theologically and biblically empowering for many Korean American Christians. At the same time, it seems that there is no acknowledgement of any multiplicity in this cross process for individuals who have multiple internal states, roles, and relationships; not all people may get to the state of enchantment of the cross. Park talks about the value of multicultural development, multiethnic development, but it still seems a grand theory which does not allow for the multiple differences of individuals. I also question his understanding of old self and new self as a forsaking process within the Korean American identity process. Within identity formation, especially in postmodern culture, it is hard to separate one's old self from one's new self. There can be process of transforming one's identity, but we must beware of goals that are idealistic, not realistic. While I see the benefit of Park's enchantment model, there is an unrealistic aspect to his understanding.

S. Steve Kang lays out the importance of the socioculturally constructed self for second-generation Korean American young adults. The main argument of this article is the social construction of the multivoiced Korean American young adult identity.<sup>311</sup> Social construction of knowledge is a postmodern presupposition, and Kang's argument supports this, because Korean American second-generation young adults have lived in a multicultural society mainly between Korean culture and mainstream American society. Kang reports that a majority of Korean American young adults have a hard time grasping

---

<sup>311</sup> S. Steve Kang, "The Socioculturally Constructed Multivoiced Self," 82.

the complexity of their identity, which he refers to being an "MBP (multiple-box person)" or a "PWI (person with issues)".<sup>312</sup> Preliminary findings from Kang's qualitative research with many young adults,<sup>313</sup> indicate that they feel obligated to live out possible selves which are not their own, but are those of their parents and church leaders. The mainstream U.S. society also has certain expectations toward second-generation Korean Americans, stereotyping and compelling them to become who it thinks these young adults are: the so-called model minority.<sup>314</sup> Therefore, the challenges of multicultural living as a second-generation Korean American are reported as negative and painful, and their identity formation is affected further by their parents and church leaders. Therefore, the role of these adults in constructing a healthy multivoiced identity is important. Park's and Kang's concern for the development of multicultural identity for Korean Christian Americans, and second-generation Korean American young adults, involves an unavoidable reality of multiplicity in the Korean American self; there is a concern, hope, and task regarding fostering a healthy development of multiplicity in the self. This has implications for how multiplicity will play out for the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship.

#### Dialogue between Interrelating Values and American Pastoral Theologians' Views

Like Andrew Sung Park's suggestion for a theology of enchantment, S. Steve Kang's validation of the second-generation Korean young adult's multivoiced self is a positive and natural aspect of self from a postmodern perspective. I described the inter-

---

<sup>312</sup> S. Steve Kang, "The Socioculturally Constructed Multivoiced Self," 90. S. Steve Kang does not specifically define these terms. I employ MBP as a metaphor for Korean American young adults who struggle to live in multiple cultures. Also, I use PWI to exemplify the struggles of Korean American young adults' life.

<sup>313</sup> Kang does not specify the number of interviews in his study.

<sup>314</sup> S. Steve Kang, "The Socioculturally Constructed Multivoiced Self," 90.

relating values of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*. Out of the multiple choices for multicultural living, I suggested these three values for fostering healthy connections for the Korean Christian immigrant family.

Here, I will use the interrelating values of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* in a dialogue with three U.S. pastoral theologians, in order to find some insights from these theologians' views on the family for a constructive formation of Korean American family life. Based upon these theologians' critiques and suggestions, I would like to suggest using interrelating values for the affirmation of multiplicity in the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship. Especially, Korean Christian immigrants have to deal with Korean cultures and dominant U.S. culture. Can leading American pastoral theologians' practical theologies of family be compatible with my creation of interrelating values for multicultural living by the Korean Christian immigrant family? How can these multi-concepts be helpful for dialoguing with U.S. pastoral theologians who also dream of better family relationships in the U.S. context? Are these pastoral theologians' arguments helpful for the Korean Christian immigrant family trying to live as Korean and Americans in dominant U.S. culture? I hope that this dialogical reflection on the differing views of Don S. Browning, Herbert Anderson, and Bonnie Miller-McLemore regarding a practical theology of family will provide helpful insights for the Korean Christian immigrant family. I will critically review these three pastoral theologians' work in relation to Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*.

### Critiques and Benefits: Don S. Browning's Practical Theology of Equal Regard

Don Browning employs practical theology to explore the U.S family from the perspective of Protestant Christianity. Browning commits to a practical theological project emphasizing church policy, and he implores the church to be involved in public policy-making. He recognizes the importance of identifying the power of patriarchy to foster unequal Christian family living. With helpful insights and wisdom, Browning asserts a practical theology of equal regard as Christian love.<sup>315</sup> He contends that a practical theology of equal family rights is a practice of Christian love.

Browning wants to protect the two-parent family as a standard form for a healthy and normal family. Based upon his theology of equal regard, his preference for the two-parent intact family seems to conflict with his theology of equal regard or mutuality in relation to other diverse forms of family, such as single parenting, out-of-wedlock parenting, teen parenting, gay/lesbian parenting, and other diverse forms of loving, caring family relationships. It is not just that he prefers a certain form of family; he does not mention the cultural diversity in family dynamics. Given the demographics of the United States, the recognition of cultural diversity is critical for adequate family policy. Browning's practical theology of equal regard and mutuality is valuable for family justice in a patriarchal society, but it is not adequate to acknowledge and address diverse family

---

<sup>315</sup> I have consulted these materials: Don S. Browning, "Is the Family a Conservative Issue?," in *Equality and the Family: A Fundamental, Practical Theology of Children, Mothers, and Fathers in Modern Societies* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 63-73; Don S. Browning, "Empirical Considerations in Religious Praxis and Reflection," in *Equality and the Family: A Fundamental, Practical Theology of Children, Mothers, and Fathers in Modern Societies* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 43-44; Christine E. Gudorf, "Sacrificial and Parental Spiritualities," in *Religion, Feminism, and the Family*, ed. Anne Carr and Mary Stuart Van Leeuwen (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 297-300; Don S. Browning, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, Pamela D. Couture, K. Brynolf Lyon, and Robert M. Franklin, eds., *From Culture Wars to Common Ground: Religion and the American Family Debate* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 272.

styles and diverse cultures. Without these important considerations, his commitment for public policy-making may create more injustice for marginalized families in the United States.

Still, for the Korean Christian American family, Browning's focus on equal regard and mutuality is helpful, as well as his focus on parental authority. He points out that the lack of parental authority is a critical issue for family dynamics. He also cautions against the too-individualized family. Therefore, in sum, he wants to balance recovery of parental authority and more family cohesion among family members. His desire for parental authority and family cohesion can be described as Mutual Respect and Authentic *Jeong*.

In my argument, I want to observe that the Korean Christian family has been centered on the Korean sense of *Hyo* (authority), so that parents believe that they have, and should have, unquestioned power over their children. As the same time, the reality of individualism in the United States, does not allow most parents to have the control over their children that they desire. Korean American children believe that they are the agents of their lives, and they do not understand why their Korean parents try to control their lives. The Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship and Browning's concern about the parent-child dyad are a bit different, but they share the concern of how to balance parental authority and individualism. Therefore, Mutual Respect (*Hyo* + Mutuality) carries Browning's struggle for the American family dynamic as well as the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship.

Also Authentic *Jeong* carries the value of Browning's equal regard for family equality. Browning wants to empower women as equal partners with their husbands. His point about "equal family" also can dialogue with Authentic *Jeong*. The Korean sense of

*Jeong* is like a colorfully entangled ball of yarn. It represents a beautiful cohesion of family from the outside, from the point of view of an outsider who yearns for family cohesion. However, from an insider's perspective, it is good to be together but, at the same time, it is painful to be together because of the family's way of inhibiting most members' agency and freedom. Most of the time, women and children do not have the power or agency to cut the tangled yarn and use it for their own desires. Therefore, *Jeong* has to start a dialogue with authenticity that is based on one's subjectivity.

Without one's own subjectivity in the colorfully tangled yarn, those individual threads cannot ever be used, except as part of a colorful yarn ball. Therefore, Browning's assertion of equal regard of family members is a necessary message for the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship. Korean parents who used to be immersed in the culture of *Jeong* may not understand how painful those individual threads in the colorful yarn ball can be. They have been accustomed to being in the ball, all the time. The family has been one unit, so that they may think of it as a norm.

However, the more they become Americanized, the more they are immersed in American individualism, the individual in the family unit, like an individual thread in the ball of yarn, starts to move, rub, and realize that it is not easy to get out of the yarn ball peacefully. They think about either cutting the yarn or giving up their individualization. To make things worse for the Korean Christian American family, the evangelical Korean immigrant church context wants them to fit into a family-oriented culture and a family-centered ministry. At the same time, each family in a different location for their working environment in the States is asked to perform at a different level of an individualized sense of self identity. Therefore, from an American individualist perspective, the Asian

family's cohesion seems to be the key for the success of the Model Minority syndrome. It requires the sacrifice of each family member to create this family cohesion, though in Korean contexts those sacrifices are made mostly by women and children. This is not to say that Korean Christian immigrant fathers do not also make tremendous sacrifice for their children's education and survival.

Overall, this Korean Christian immigrant family context requires a balance between individualism and family cohesion. Authentic *Jeong* embodies the value of individuality, as well as playing an important role in family cohesion. So, the typical U.S. family and the Korean American immigrant family may have a different expectation for the level of individualization and family cohesion. However, reflecting upon Browning's thought, there should be a culturally appropriate individualization and family cohesion for each family, and also the careful consideration of parental authority and children's rights for an ethic of equal regard and mutual respect.

#### Critiques and Benefits: Herbert Anderson's Practical Theology of Family

Herbert Anderson's concept of intimacy is based upon a family's individuation and unity.<sup>316</sup> His understanding of family individuation and the family as a unit is similar to the concept of "self-in-family" that I offered for a feminist practical theology of connection for the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship.<sup>317</sup> As with Anderson's point, many Western theories, such as family systems theory and interpersonal theory, validate the importance of the balance of the individual and the community. However, what I mean by "self-in-family" is based upon the concept of Authentic *Jeong*, which validates the attentiveness to individual need as well as the

---

<sup>316</sup> Herbert Anderson, *The Family and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 54.

<sup>317</sup> Herbert Anderson, *The Family and Pastoral Care*, 15-17.



connection with others. It presupposes both individual and community. However, the individual is not just placed in the community. Each individual and community is intertwined so that they are together but also separate. I hope to have more clear room between the strands of the colorful yarn ball, so that the colorful ball can be used and each individual thread also can be used. In this regard, the concept of self-in-family makes sense culturally, and Authentic *Jeong* is worthwhile.

In relation to this view, for Anderson, healthy individuation is the power to know when to be together and when to be separate. It is critically important for the Korean Christian family's developing Authentic *Jeong*, which makes for authentic connection. Authentic *Jeong* is also associated with Anderson's understanding of balanced interdependence. His understanding of interdependence is based on complementarity, intimacy, and covenant.<sup>318</sup> Complementarity is supporting each other's weakness. It is similar to Authentic *Jeong*'s attunement to individual need. Intimacy is possible between autonomy and mutuality.<sup>319</sup> Authentic *Jeong* is possible between the healthy individual and the healthy family. If there is no clear "I" in intimacy, real intimacy cannot be developed. If there is not a healthy self in family, there will be possible entanglement of individual desires and hurt within this tangled ball as a family.

Herbert Anderson's notion of a "just family" is a helpful insight. He points out that, from a Christian perspective, the family has to be a just community. Each individual, including father, mother, and child, have to be equally respected and supported. Each needs to develop clear and age-appropriate roles, rules, and boundaries. If there are no clear boundaries, rules, and roles, family members can commit sin, and injustice can

---

<sup>318</sup> Herbert Anderson, *The Family and Pastoral Care*, 54.

<sup>319</sup> Herbert Anderson, *The Family and Pastoral Care*, 56-57.

happen. Anderson's understanding of sin in the family raises a question for the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship and leads to reflection. Do Korean Christian immigrant parents realize that the lack of healthy boundaries, roles, and rules is sinful? Do Korean Christian immigrant children realize how much they need to be equally treated and respected as a precious child of God? Are both Korean Christian immigrant parents and children helped to know how much their cultural understanding impacts their daily boundaries, rules, and roles without thinking about hurting each other or supporting each other? Without careful consideration and exploration, Korean Christian immigrant parents' and children's stories of *Han* will continue. Many Korean Christian immigrant parents share their stories of *Han*, suffering, from a sacrificial parental perspective. Their stories of *Han* also impact their boundaries, rules, and roles with their children. Children's stories of *Han* are also continually created. The cycle of *Han* cannot be stopped unless one's *Han* is resolved, and healed.

Both Korean Christian immigrant parents' and children's stories of suffering will not be shared until they are welcomed. Unwelcomed stories are repressed and suppressed and are reborn as broken boundaries, rules, and roles in the Korean Christian immigrant family. Therefore, as Anderson points out, without families being supported toward healthy individuation, intimacy, and awareness of what sin in the family can be, the stories of *Han* cannot be transformed into Transformative Suffering (*Han* + vulnerability) for change.

This issue is related to Anderson's understanding of the theologically important act of leaving home. Leaving home is an important developmental process for identity

and re-identity formation.<sup>320</sup> Anderson describes four situations that present difficulty relative to leaving home: if there is no clear and healthy boundary; if there is no parental blessing; if there is no family to be supportive; if there is a painful loss in one's family. Also, healthy leaving presupposes insights, awareness of, and coping skills for change. As well as knowledge of the importance of time and space for grief.<sup>321</sup> How many Korean Christian immigrant parents develop such coping skills for immigration; for example, new language capacity and ability to engage in job searches? How many Korean Christian immigrants equip their children for this change? How many Korean Christian immigrant parents notice all these changes in their children? How many Korean Christian immigrant parents give time, energy, and grace to grieve their potential and actual losses as immigrants? How many Korean Christian immigrant parents were really ready for this healthy leaving from Korea? If I go back to a more developmental question for Korean Christian immigrant parents, how many of them were supported in their leaving home experiences in such stages as adolescence, young adulthood, marriage, having children and, finally, this immigration, which is leaving their home country?

If this has not happened for most Korean Christian immigrant parents, how would they deal with their own grief, failure, loneliness, and frustration, all of which can lead into “*Han*-ridden/painful” experiences as an immigrant. Anderson and Mitchell also name this as a troubled leaving home. Anderson points out that a healthy theological, developmental, and religious act such as leaving requires true blessing for the one who

---

<sup>320</sup> Herbert Anderson and Kenneth R. Mitchell, *Leaving Home* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 14.

<sup>321</sup> Herbert Anderson and Kenneth R. Mitchell, *Leaving Home*, 89-105.

leaves.<sup>322</sup> This true blessing can help to prepare them to heal their *Han* and suffering so that they can recover their suffering experience for Transformative Suffering for their own lives, as well as for their children's lives.

### Critiques and Benefits: Bonnie Miller-McLemore's Practical Maternal Feminist Practical Theology

Both Browning and Anderson emphasize the importance of family equality and equal respect for children. However, Bonnie Miller-McLemore's maternal feminist theology raises this to its highest pitch.<sup>323</sup> One of her important possible contributions for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships is the validation of the mothers' and children's equality as a theological justice issue. As a feminist practical theologian, she uses Transformative Suffering to raise the maternal scholar's voice. In other words, in her research, she has found that for over 90 percent of women, childrearing happens at some point. But, in theology, there has been a silence about mother's work and love as a major theological topic. Miller-McLemore uses her personal and painful experience as a feminist as well as a seminary professor who still is governed by a capitalist market-driven society to break the silence as a feminist mother who works. Her task is to explore, as a mother, how to balance family and work, for the sake of theological justice.

Like Miller-McLemore's transformative and courageous breaking of the silence, the silence regarding Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships has to be broken for the sake of theological justice, and also for the hope to transform Korean Christian immigrant parents' and children's pain, to be used for their healing and growth. As I indicated in Chapter Two, Korean Christian immigrants' parent-child relationships

---

<sup>322</sup> Herbert Anderson and Kenneth R. Mitchell, *Leaving Home*, 107-108.

<sup>323</sup> Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *Also a Mother: Work and Family as Theological Dilemma* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 23, 75, 93.

should recover not only the voice of mothers and children but the voice of the powerless fathers as well.

Bonnie Miller-McLemore broke the silence to raise a voice for mothers and children.<sup>324</sup> However, this was done ultimately for the redistribution and balance of family power and to support the marginalized. In this regard, for the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship, all fathers,' mothers,' and children's silence has to be broken. The nature of suffering is differently layered and complicated. Korean Christian immigrant fathers have to go through a severe change in social status. Different family acculturation affects their individuation and identity process. Their wives' increased financial income affects their couple relationship as well as parental authority. Men may lose control over money, the couple relationship, and parenting. Women lose their reliance on the financial security of their husband. Undeveloped, the families' Korean-style communicative pattern leaves everyone's adjustment process and grieving process as an individual task. Their unnamed, unsupported immigration adjustment and grief process leave them *Han*-ridden, and suffering. This unhealed pain easily explodes at home and in another extended family, such as the Korean Christian immigrant church.

Similar to Miller-McLemore's commitment to women's and children's rights, each individual in the Korean Christian immigrant family needs "attentive love, as formulated by Sarah Ruddick, which is a capacity for holding, providing humility, sense of limit, humor and resilience, cheerfulness, reality check, respect for persons, and

---

<sup>324</sup> Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *Also a Mother: Work and Family as Theological Dilemma*, 23, 75, 93.

responsiveness to growth.”<sup>325</sup> These relational qualities are found in the combination of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering and Authentic *Jeong*. Attentive love cares about one’s pain as humility, cares about the importance of respect, and cares about the importance of holding and connection. For a healthy Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship, there should be persons, communities, congregations and government agencies that can provide “attentive love” for the process of their immigration. The whole supporting system can make a big difference in their leaving and arriving processes, their individuation process, and how they deal with their suffering. This can make a difference in creating God’s justice on earth. Miller-McLemore’s insightful help for Korean Christian immigrant parents and children moves forward in the specific love that they need.

### Conclusion

Multiplicity matters. It matters for fostering a thriving life in a Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship. I have shown the benefits and challenges of multiplicity in images of God and in parenting styles, especially bringing out that all multiple images of God and parenting styles are helpful to find parts of our selves. It also helps to point out the dynamism of the multiplicity in images of God and parenting styles. This dynamism helps us to create our own styles and find our own fragmented but natural style of multiple, changing, and fluid parenting style.

The Korean Christian immigrant’s multiple selves, parenting styles, and images of God are a way to disempower so-called normal knowledge, the universal typology that

---

<sup>325</sup>Sara Ruddick, “A Work of One’s Own,” *Working It Out: 23 Writers, Artists, Scientists, and Scholars Talk About Their Lives and Work*, ed. Sara Ruddick and Pamela Daniels (New York: Pantheon Books), 140-141. Cited by Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *Also A Mother: Work and Family as Theological Dilemma*, 157.

oppresses a silenced and marginalized population such as the Korean Christian immigrant family. The Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship cannot be defined as a normal or natural style of parent-child relationship, according to dominant U.S. culture. However, I have reframed the value of multiplicity theologically and psychologically, and have argued that multiple, changing, and fluid identity is natural and organic. This helps to liberate the Korean Christian immigrant family who is not following dominant U.S. culture, and chooses—and is expected— constantly to live with multicultural, dissociative levels of dialogue both internally and externally. Therefore, I claim a space for the Korean Christian immigrant family to talk about their multiplicity in themselves, with their family, with their God, as a natural part of their life, so that they can liberate their internal sense of silence or even a possible sense of isolation and pathology.

Now, I face the next task of creating a feminist pastoral theology of connection for the Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship. Based upon theological reflection on the value of multiplicity, it is now time to create a feminist pastoral theology of connection for pastoral care, and counseling for Korean Christian immigrant families. What connection are they yearning for? Is connection possible in this multiplicity? What possible pastoral care and counseling is available for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships? How are interrelating values helpful for healthy multicultural living for them? In Chapter Six, now let us create a feminist pastoral theology of connection and show its impact in pastoral care and counseling.

## Chapter 6

### A Feminist Pastoral Theology of Connection for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

In this chapter, I assert a feminist pastoral theology of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. This is done in three stages. First, I identify some important theological aspects of connection, including inter-relating, multiplicity, change, fluidity, and justice, for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Second, I offer suggestions for more culturally-attuned pastoral care and counseling that can offer the benefit of empowering connections and preventing disconnections in Korean Christian immigrant families. In addressing changes to traditional pastoral care, I suggest the role of ritual, religious education, and psycho-education, specifically through relational cultural growth groups. Finally, I provide a case study to illustrate use of a relational cultural growth pastoral counseling approach.

### A Feminist Pastoral Theology of Connection for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

As a Korean Christian immigrant feminist mother and seminary student, I have been in constant internal battles between *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*, which penetrate deeply my relationships with my parents and children. The more time I have spent learning here in the States, the more the feminist values of mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity influence me as a mother.

With these multiple values, concepts, and traditions, I envision interweaving the theological and cultural tenets to construct a feminist pastoral theology of connection. I dream about: connection within myself; connection between my Korean self and my American self; my older self and my newer self; my feminist self and my patriarchal self.



I also dream about: the connection between me and my husband; the connection between my family of origin and my husband's family of origin; my own desire and his desire; my desire approved in culture and his desire approved in culture, and; my desire disapproved in culture and his desire disapproved in culture. I dream about: my connection with my children; connection between the residue from my own childhood and my children's; connection between my rules and my roles as a feminist mother and my children's desires and expectations for a feminist parent. I dream about my connection in faith, cultures, training, and scholarship, because the discrepancy between my real life and remote voices hurts me deeply.

As I see no simple solution for building such a connection, it creates deep pain, but also greater coping skills that enable me to serve as someone who knows about the struggle for connection in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. This is the reason why I dream about a feminist pastoral theology of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. With my own dream of finding a reflection for a connection in pastoral theological perspective, I have been with many Korean Christian immigrant parents and children who suffer from disconnection. This has been a major source of suffering in my congregational and clinical experiences working with Korean American families. There are resources available, but they are not resources that meet their customized needs, especially in light of their struggles with living amidst Korean culture and dominant U.S. culture. In this multicultural existence in a postmodern age, what are the pastoral theological, care, and counseling resources for these Korean Christian immigrant families who are exploring their yearning for greater familial connection?

### Interrelating Connection

What is a feminist pastoral theology of connection in light of a postmodern perspective that honors multiple, fluid, and changing human selves? What type of feminist pastoral theology of connection recognizes the interrelating values of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*? Thus far I have reviewed literature in psychology, biblical studies, theology, and pastoral theology to start a dialogue among *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* with mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity. Those are my theological tenets. I believe that *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* are critically important Korean cultural traditions for connection in Korean parent-child relationships. Also, mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity are important values for connection according to Relational Cultural Theory. Therefore, for the multicultural living of Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relational connection, I propose three sets of interrelating values for fostering connection in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

In light of our work with these concepts in previous chapters, the following are combined terms for a feminist pastoral theology of connection: Mutual Respect (*Hyo* +Mutuality), Transformative Suffering (*Han* +Vulnerability), and Authentic *Jeong* (*Jeong* +Authenticity). These concepts are not disparate or distinct, but rather exist in a fluid and interchangeable combination. There is no fixed proportion or percentage for the role and operation of each value. It depends on contexts and situations. For example, some parent-child relationships may require more *Hyo*, while others may need more mutuality. However, all relationships require a combination of Mutual Respect,

Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* in order to achieve healthy Korean Christian immigrant family dynamics.

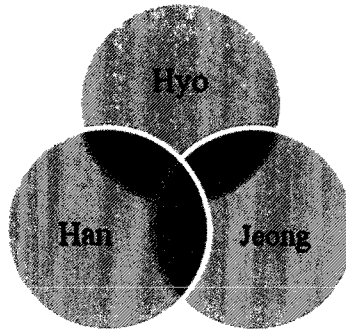


Figure 1: Three Korean Cultural Traditions Infusing Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

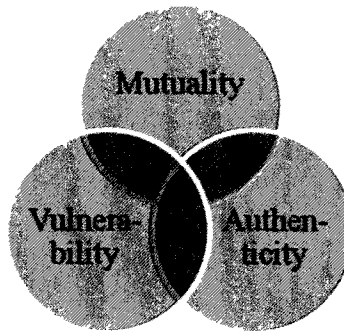


Figure 2: In Relational Cultural Theory, Three Qualities Infusing Human Connection

Figures 1 and 2 provide a visual image of the interconnectedness of each of the three connectional concepts. In addition, there is a complex interrelationship between the values of *Han*, *Hyo*, *Jeong*, mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity. Figure 3 is a more complex, three-dimensional diagram that provides a visual image of the multiple possible interactions of these concepts and values. This idea is borrowed from K. Samuel Lee's

orthogonal model of Korean American family's self-identification scale.<sup>326</sup> Lee also argues the inadequacy of mono-scale cultural identification scales for Korean Americans who navigate numerous multicultural natures. In the orthogonal cultural identification model it is not necessary to give up aspects of one's cultural identity; it does not force a situation in which one must choose either/or, or smoothly integrate seemingly impossible oppositional elements. I appreciate this multi-dimensional model of cultural identification; I appreciate the way in which it values Korean American's multicultural living by recognizing that we do not always have to choose one culture or the other. I value how this model can be understood to highlight theological, cultural, and psychological values of multiplicity in this regard. Every different Korean Christian immigrant has a choice to stay in his or her own multiple zones.

Figure 3 below portrays these interrelated sets of concepts and values. Each concept is separately valuable and existing, and also each concept and value is interactive, interrelating, and changing. Therefore, in reality, these different and separate concepts that are embedded in our complex lives can also overlap and be fluid and changing. This interaction happens in complex and multiple ways, like watching a three-dimensional movie. Also, depending on the quality of the three-dimensional glasses the movie-viewer is wearing, the quality of the movie can be improved. The use of interrelating values is one possible way of thinking about connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Interrelating values are just one suggestive value and possibility out

---

<sup>326</sup> K. Samuel Lee, "Korean American Cultural Identifications: Effect on Mental Stress and Self Esteem" (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 1995), 53.

of multiple other combinations of these values and concepts. Thus, I consider this diagram to offer just one visual metaphor and conceptual guideline for a feminist pastoral theology of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships, while acknowledging that there may be others.

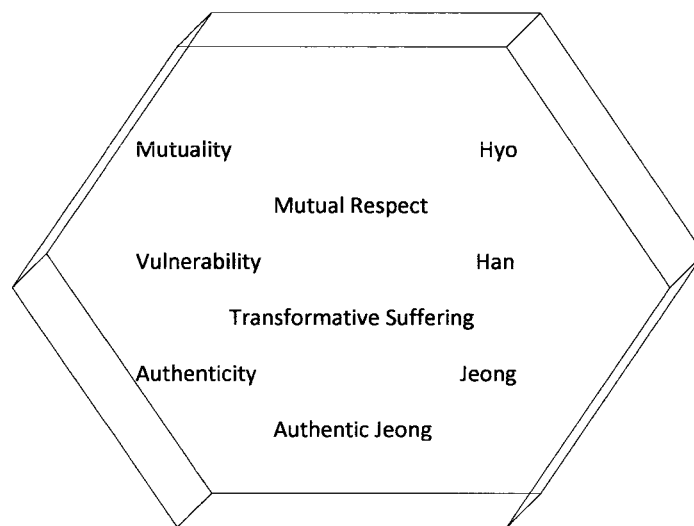


Figure 3: Co-existing, Fluid, Multiple, Interchangeable, Changing, Interrelating Values of Connection for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

Having this visual image of connection with interrelating values assists me in proposing some theological emphases for a feminist pastoral theology of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

#### Multiple, Fluid, and Changing Connection

A feminist pastoral theology of connection necessitates multiple, fluid, and changing connections based upon a postmodern theological anthropology. Postmodern theological anthropology defines humanity as having qualities of multiplicity, change, and fluidity. This theological perspective does not assert that each human being is a fixed entity. Therefore, I assert that multiplicity of connections has value for Korean Christian

immigrant parent-child relationships. Connection implicitly carries with it the notion that a relationship can undergo disconnection and also reconnection. For this argument, I agree with Pamela Cooper-White's understanding that a goal of therapy is to meet multiple parts of ourselves.<sup>327</sup> Cooper-White asserts that in order for pastoral caregivers and counselors to meet with their careseekers and clients, we must accept that as caregivers we can only meet whatever aspects or parts of ourselves the careseekers and clients present at that moment. She uses the metaphor of the careseeker. Originally, she develops this metaphor from patient and therapist relationships, and thus there might be some discrepancy in applying this metaphor to parent-child relationships. However, I contend that it still offers some helpful insights. For example, she understands that therapist and patient relationships are multiple and complex. Therapists meets clients' complex web of relationships, and cultures, past and present. Also, there is another layer of conscious and unconscious realities. Therapists should be aware of this multiplicity and the resulting complex meaning(s) as a central aspect of relational psychoanalytic therapy.<sup>328</sup>

Cooper-White points out the multiple layers inherent in the meeting of two human beings, with multiple elements necessary for understanding the dynamics of psychoanalysis. It is a bit challenging to apply these relational therapeutic dynamics to actual parent-child dynamics. Parent-child dynamics obviously differ from therapeutic dynamics for many reasons. However, it is beneficial for parents to think about meeting with their child and engaging multiple layers of internal mental processes both from the

---

<sup>327</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *Many Voices: Pastoral Psychotherapy in Relational and Theological Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 153.

<sup>328</sup> Pamela Cooper-White, *Many Voices*, 154.

parents' side and the children's side. Furthermore, there will be multiple layers of emotional processes when they meet during the interplay of each parent's and child's daily dynamics and interactions. Especially for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships, the process of immigration and acculturation can add one or more layers to this multiplicity in human interaction and relationships.

It is important to question which part of one's internal process is acting at any given moment in human encounters and relationships. For example, we can consider Freud's structural model, mentioned earlier, which posited three aspects active in our emotional dynamics: ego, id, and superego. Thinking about parent-child relationships, we can consider that each parent has her/his own internal multiplicity in the forms of id, ego, and superego. Each child also has her/his own internal multiplicity as id, ego, and superego. Therefore, it is two persons' interactions when we see parent-child interactions, but it is also possible that multiple voices or selves are involved in parent-child relationships. How many times does a second-grader experience that she loves her family the most, only later to experience that she hates her family the most? Parent-child relationships are complex and multiple in many ways. Even in the life of the happiest family, there is still a high chance of conflict in interacting, given these multiple voices participating in parent-child interactions. In other words, at a glance, what may seem to be a simple conversation between a Korean Christian immigrant mother and youth actually involves multiple layers of dynamics. Let me give an example.

A Korean American junior high school boy asked his mom, in English spoken rather quickly, if he could volunteer at a school activity. He asked his mother if she would support his participation in the school activity, but his mother kept washing dishes

and asking, “What? What did you say? Can you say more simply in Korean?” The boy quickly became frustrated and said, “Never mind.” From this simple parent-child conversation I can imagine numerous possible scenarios. One possible scenario is that the boy wonders why his mother never supports his participation in anything social at school. Or, he might think that she cares more about dishwashing about him. Or, he may question why she never understands him when he explains things so slowly and carefully in English. His mother, on the other hand, might feel disgrace due to her boy’s attitude, and she might feel like she is not receiving *Hyo* from this child. She might want to show her parental *Jeong*, but she might be afraid of trying to communicate with him based upon her past experiences with his aggressive and reactionary style.

In a simple parent-child interaction, there will be multiple aspects at work, including past, present, and future situations, the cultural dynamics between the Korean culture of *Hyo* and the U.S. culture of parents’ active participation with children, a mother’s past experiences of her son’s aggression, a boy’s past experiences of his mother’s lack of attentive response to his requests, and more. These many layers of mother and boy can foster connection and disconnection. This boy and mother may verbally meet but emotionally feel distant. This feeling of frustration represents both the boy’s and mother’s yearning and expectation for love, connection, and intimacy. Therefore, even in this simple scene, multiple parts of this boy and mother are meeting and separating. It can be hard to say whether someone is connecting or disconnecting. Even though there will be an element of connection at some level of relationship, there might be a deep level of disconnection that remains. Because of this, a feminist pastoral theology of connection values multiple, changing, and fluid connections for Korean



Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. A majority of Korean Christian immigrant parents and children experience disconnection. For helping Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships, a two-fold approach is required. First, the validation of totalistic and perfectionistic senses of connection needs to be changed toward multiple, changing, and fluid connections. Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships can be experienced multiply, partially, and fluidly. For example, if we reframe the nature of connection from totalistic and perfectionistic senses of connection toward multiple, changing, and fluid connection, we can validate both the connection and disconnection that regularly are co-occurring in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. For example, in the vignette above, a teen boy might experience discomfort or frustration as a result of his mother's lack of response to his request. This can be reframed that both mother and son tried to communicate and connect at the verbal level. Without fully investigating the situation, both mother and son failed to pursue the conversational process. Both mother's and son's feelings of hurt and disrespect are signs of their deep yearning for love and connection. This unnamed expectation can be explored by themselves or with one other, and insight derived from that exploration may be helpful as they navigate their next conversation. It is an artificial scenario, but a postmodern perspective allows us to reframe the disconnections that occur on a daily basis.

Multiplicity is another dynamic at work that impacts parent-child relational dynamics. At the same time as parent and child connect with one another, they also operate with multiple connections to others, even caregivers. In both, parents have been seen as the most powerful source of love and pathology. Many parents operate with significant fear of damaging their children's psychological well-being due to their way of

parenting. They may spend significant time feeling anxious about their children's well-being as a pure parental responsibility. However, parents and children are multiple themselves, and their relationships with other multiple beings are also multiple. We live in the flood of multiple relationships both within ourselves and with others. Therefore, dancing in these multiple relationships with our own parent-child relationship necessitates recognizing the influences of these external (and internal) relationships with others. Cultivating these multiple connections within ourselves and others will be an important reality and task for developing a healthy parent-child relationship for Korean Christian immigrants.

Second, prevention of excessive disconnection in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships also will be required.<sup>329</sup> Prevention of disconnection will be further addressed later in this chapter as we explore the development of pastoral care and counseling for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Here what I propose is to validate small, partial connections that we can find, and use them to foster more and better connections. Sometimes, we may wish for a grand, perfect, and totalistic sense of connection—an idealistic connection. However, does such a thing exist? Is there a happily-ever-after married couple or a happily-ever-after parent-child relationship? If we cannot validate our small happinesses, small truths, and small connections in the midst of complex, ambiguous, multiple, changing, and fluid human relationships, it might be difficult to positively see the hope in our relationships as a whole. I offer Figure 4 as a way to visualize connections between multiple, three-dimensional human beings.

---

<sup>329</sup> Not all disconnection can or needs to be prevented because there are healthy and necessary disconnections, too. I described this aspect in Chapter Three.

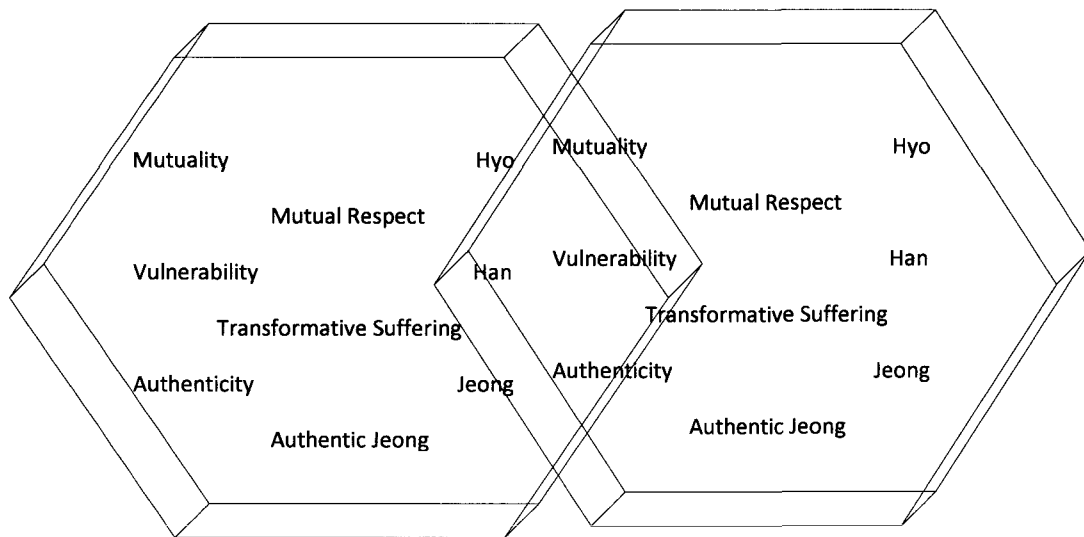


Figure 4: Multiple, Changing, and Fluid Connections between Two Persons

If I could use flash animation, these two diagrams would move back and forth and probably appear and disappear to highlight the fluid and changing nature of human connections.

#### Just Connection

There are always benefits if we can try to see things positively. However, could this postmodern approach be used to maximize absolute relativism or to eradicate the voice of marginalized people? For example, if a battered woman can find positive aspects in her husband then can she appreciate him and remain abused? What if by validating all small truths, we hide the liberating voices of the marginalized? For example, what happens if we validate all parents' small and heartfelt love for their children, even if those children are trapped in an abusive family system? What if validating all children's small truths results in perpetuating their undisciplined attitudes, thus breaking their parents' hearts? A feminist pastoral theology of connection admits all these challenges, but it presupposes a postmodern philosophy of liberating small and partial knowledge for the

empowerment of marginalized voices. It presupposes that such liberation will disempower powerful, grand, totalistic narratives and knowledge that have operated to silence the voices of the oppressed. In this regard, a feminist pastoral theology of connection desires just connection.<sup>330</sup>

In this project, I make multiple attempts to highlight human multiplicity and demonstrate the complexity in human connection. Therefore, I acknowledge human complexity, ambiguity, and multiplicity as a starting point for human connection. From this presupposition, I start to see a validating part of Confucianism toward fostering a Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship. However, am I going to admit to the small truths present in Confucian values? I admit that there is a Confucian heritage that still impacts, both negatively and positively, our human relationships, no matter if we are consciously or unconsciously aware of it. While I admit to the dangers of using Korean values that are grounded in a male hierarchy, there are small truths within this heritage that can be reclaimed. Namsoon Kang asserts that since the 1970s, there has been a theological debate or discourse addressing the element of inter-connectedness in "Asian" values.<sup>331</sup> However, Namsoon Kang asserts that these interconnections rely on oversimplification and idealization of Asian values, and increase stereotyping of Asians. Therefore, patriarchal authoritarianism is glorified as a resource for Asian economic development. Neo-conservatism is revived and gender discrimination is justified in the name of noble Asian values. Gender issues are often ignored as neither urgent nor

---

<sup>330</sup> Namsoon Kang, "Confucian Familism and Its Social/Religious Embodiment in Christianity: Reconsidering the Family Discourse from a Feminist Perspective," *Asia Journal of Theology* 18, no. 1 (April 2004): 168-189.

<sup>331</sup> Namsoon Kang, "Confucian Familism," 169.

valid.<sup>332</sup> I concur with Namsoon Kang's argument that Asian values can be used to ignore the value of women's issues under neo-conservatism.

Therefore, creating a feminist pastoral theology of connection is essential for the creation of a just family connection. The Korean traditional concepts of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* are based upon Confucian values of family which are, in turn, based upon male hierarchy. However, these traditions are deeply ingrained traditions regardless of gender. Therefore, bringing the gender perspective to bear in creating a just connection is another task for a feminist pastoral theology of connection. Validating equality and mutuality of each family member needs to take place in order to create a just family dynamic for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Also, in immigrant family dynamics, bringing the healthy father's authority back is also an important issue. As described in Chapter Two, many Korean immigrant fathers have been disempowered due to, for example, their slower acculturation as compared to other family members, lack of social status, etc.; thus, for Korean Christian immigrant families it is important to support women's and children's equality but also to balance family equality by empowering disempowered fathers toward healthy authority.

As I described in Chapter Five, U.S. pastoral theologians' views of just family will be beneficial in thinking about just connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. In order to create a just connection within Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships, the value of equal regard (Don Browning), the role of self-in-family (Herbert Anderson), and the breaking of silence for mothers and children (Bonnie Miller-McLemore) are critically important for fostering a just

---

<sup>332</sup> Namsoon Kang, "Confucian Familism," 171.

connection. Korean American pastoral theologian Angella Son also asserts that Korean American mothers' inadequate sense of self is based upon the Confucian notion of male hierarchy over women and children, and on contemporary South Korean views of motherhood, which pressures mothers to be good educators and sees them as good mothers only if they send their children to the best colleges. This pressure leads Korean American first-generation mothers to be supporters of their children's education without cultivating a healthy individual sense of self. Therefore, Angella Son criticizes the Confucian values of male hierarchy that lead Korean American mothers to lose themselves and focus on the pursuit of a better life for their children.<sup>333</sup> Angella Son's argument encourages Korean American mothers to cultivate a sense of self and demonstrates the importance of creating a just connection among Korean Christian immigrant families, even when male hierarchical familialism endures. Angella Son recommends that Korean American churches be very careful in their use of a theology of sacrifice for Korean American women. The theological message of sacrifice can easily reinforce the women's culturally developed sense of sacrifice and their efforts to support others. Therefore, Angella Son helps to differentiate self-denying sacrifice from "salvageable sacrifice," originally used by Brita L. Gill-Austern.<sup>334</sup>

Self-sacrifice is life-denying sacrifice, whereas salvageable sacrifice is life-giving sacrifice. There is an inevitable nature of sacrifice in mothering and parenting. However, it is important to notice the difference between these two kinds of sacrifice and learn how

---

<sup>333</sup> Angella Son, "Pastoral Care of Korean American Women: The Degeneration of Mothering into the Management of an Inadequate Sense of Self," in *Women Out of Order: Risking Change and Creating Care in a Multicultural World*, ed. Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner and Teresa Snorton (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 57-69.

<sup>334</sup> Brita L. Gill-Austern, "Love Understood as Self-Sacrifice and Self-Denial: What Does it Do to Women?" in *Through the Eyes of Women: Insights for Pastoral Care*, ed. Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 310-315.

to cultivate the selves and lives of both parents and children.<sup>335</sup> Therefore, cultivating a healthy theological empowerment of sacrifice for Korean American mothers is a critical task for Korean American churches. Angella Son's summation of how South Korean culture encourages maternal responsibility for the success of children's education . reminds me how closely related South Korean and Korean Christian immigrant cultures really are. Therefore it might be helpful to reflect upon the pastoral theology of Woonsan Son, Korean pastoral theologian, regarding contemporary family issues in Korea. He reviews the diversity of Korean family systems from traditional two-parent families, single-headed families, divorced families, and child-headed families, as well as the emergence of a diversity of roles in families which differ from the traditional male-centered family.

Woonsan Son argues for more healthy roles for women that are different from the traditional sacrificial role, as well as a new role for the father that is different from the traditional authoritarian father role. At the end, he proposes that the church adopt a campaign toward the healing and education of the extended postmodern family.<sup>336</sup> Therefore, both in Korea and in Korean American culture in the United States, the need of familial equality and the role of the church for helping contemporary Korean families seems to be similar and necessary. Also, the consistent emphasis in Korean, Korean American, and other U.S. pastoral theologians' views on cultivating just family relationships is important and must be noted. Therefore, I have highlighted a feminist pastoral theology of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child

---

<sup>335</sup> Angella Son, "Pastoral Care of Korean American Women," 73.

<sup>336</sup> Woonsan Son, "현대 가족의 모습과 목회 [Contemporary Family and Pastoral Care]," *목회와 상담* [Pastoral Care and Counseling] 1 (2001): 5-44.

relationships that are based on: 1) interrelating values of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*; 2) admitting multiple, changing, and fluid connections; 3) just connection within the Korean Christian immigrant family. Based upon a feminist pastoral theology of connection, what pastoral care and counseling will be necessary for the healing and prevention of disconnection in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships?

### Interrelating Values as a Resource for Pastoral Care and Counseling for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

I have developed a set of suggestions for pastoral caregivers, pastors, and pastoral counselors to use in exploring Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* in their ministries with parents and families. These interrelating values can serve as a helpful resource for caregivers who are working to develop these values within Korean Christian immigrant families, and for those families who are seeking connection in parent-child relationships. These suggestions will help Korean Christian immigrant parents and children to think about their sense of authority, mutuality, suffering, vulnerability, authenticity, and connection. The aim of exploring these layers is to support the development of a healthy sense of self and authority and to support the healing of suffering, and relational patterns. All suggestions are recommended, depending on the setting of pastoral care and counseling, as well as on a careseeker's capacity and need.

#### Mutual Respect

\*Explore both parents' and child's definitions and experience of authority and power; educate both parent and child about Korean *Hyo*; let them reflect on how Korean *Hyo* impacts their daily parent-child dynamics; let them discuss and decide how much *Hyo* and U.S. individualism can be balanced in their home to cultivate Mutual Respect.

\*Explore both parent-child individuation and self-differentiation within the family unit.



- \*Explore the Korean cultural value of family and how it relates to family values in the dominant culture of the United States.
- \*Explore parent's recollections of their parent-child relationships when they were children. Explore issues related to parentification so that elements of parentification can be renamed as an example of mutual growth for both parents and children. Develop mutual growth plan for both parents and children.
- \*Explore traditional parental competence from a new perspective. Educate parents about the challenges of immigration and their parental roles, not from the perspective of pathology but from a growth opportunity model.
- \* Explore both parents' and child's cultural differences, especially experience and rate of acculturation.
- \*Explore both parents' and child's different expectations for an ideal family. What differences exist between parents' and child's opinions or experiences?
- \*Explore both parents' and child's images of God, power, and authority.
- \*Explore both parents' and child's individual experiences with mentoring/education/therapy as supported by the community through acculturation.
- \*Explore the culture of authority and mutuality.
- \*Explore with individual family members or the family as a whole what "Mutual Respect" looks like in family dynamics.
- \*Explore the equality of family members and parents' use of authority.
- \*Explore how these questions and the process will be helpful toward fostering connection and preventing disconnection for the family.

### Transformative Suffering

- \*Explore both parents' and child's definitions and experiences of *Han*, suffering, and vulnerability.
- \*Share both parents' and child's stories of *Han* (suffering) from various perspectives: developmentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- \*Develop a different understanding of *Han* and vulnerability (i.e., in opposition to a traditional sense of vulnerability as a sign of weakness, teach RCT's sense of vulnerability as a normative human experience for potential growth).
- \*In regard to their immigration experience or other leave-takings, guide the family to imagine a healthy "Leaving Home"<sup>337</sup> process in terms of their preparation, coping skills, grief process, and blessings.
- \*Develop a safe (holding) environment for story-sharing.
- \*Name each family member's pain/*Han* through the sharing of stories and by normalizing the pain from their stories of *Han* (father, mother, and children).
- \*Share the story of Isaac, Abraham, and Sarah from their own immigration and religious/spiritual commitment. This Bible story also can be used to construct a narrative that parallels the biblical story with their own daily immigration struggles. Ask them to create their own story.
- \*Name the power of their experiences of *Han*/suffering that leads them into developing a RCT view of vulnerability as helpful for connection.

---

<sup>337</sup> Herbert Anderson and Kenneth R. Mitchell, *Leaving Home* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 14.

- \*Connect their experience of *Han*/suffering with the image of God of *Han*, vulnerability.
- \*Empower their immigration experience as gift for their spiritual growth and their connections with humanity and divinity. This process is also related to the healthy “Leaving Home” process for healthy identity and re-identity formation.
- \*Explore how transformation of *Han* and/or vulnerability will happen either within individual family members or within the family as a whole.
- \*Explore what Transformative Suffering looks like in individuals and in the collective family.
- \*Explore how these questions/processes will be helpful for fostering connection and preventing disconnection.

### Authentic Jeong

- \*Explore both parents' and child's definition and experience of authenticity (as understood by RCT) and *Jeong*.
- \*Invite the family to share their sense of parental *Jeong*. What is parental *Jeong* for parents and children? Explore how parental *Jeong* is expressed by parents. How do their children experience parental *Jeong* within their relationship? What parental love and connection are children desiring?
- \*Invite the family to share their sense of authentic self in family. Do they feel each one has a space and voice in the family? Explore the differences between parents' and child's sense of self in and expectations of the family.
- \*Develop an activity, conversation, or code to express their intimacy and love for both parent and child. (Develop a non-verbal mode of communication for developing family intimacy. For example, family can plan a family play day or develop an individual family-centered conversation time based upon each family's culture. Also, families can develop a family code of love and communication, such as putting a little yellow sticky note on the refrigerator as a sign of one family member's need for family activity or communication).
- \*Develop a more culturally attuned and agreed-upon way in the family of sharing love and help them to connect. Not only verbal communication, but also non-verbal means of connection are recommended for Korean Christian immigrant families.
- \*Explore the differences between being relationally responsive and reactive, based on RCT.
- \*Explore what relationally competent parenting for children might look like.
- \*Explore what emotional attunement is and why it is needed by both parents and children.
- \*Explore connection and disconnection among family members.
- \*Explore connection and disconnection within the church community, as it is seen as an extended family for many immigrants.
- \*Develop an individual self-differentiation from the Korean cultural traditional understanding of the family as one unit. Develop an authentic relationship (meaning a more self-differentiated relationship) with oneself, family, others, church, and the world. Let them imagine how they would envision their Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationship if they all could successfully follow all these steps.
- \* Explore how the family defines connection and disconnection.
- \*Explore what constitutes Authentic *Jeong* for individuals and/or the family.
- \*Explore what Authentic *Jeong* looks like for individuals and/or the family.

\*Explore how these suggestions and processes might be helpful for fostering connection and preventing disconnection for individuals and/or the family.

### More Attuned Pastoral Care for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

Kathleen D. Billman contends that pastoral caregivers must wrestle with the following questions: “1) in what kind of world do I engage in pastoral care relationships?; 2) where do I stand as a caregiver in relation to the contexts of the people with whom I engage in care? 3) what vision of wholeness or health guides my ministry of care? and 4) how do I offer care, what goals and methods are appropriate?”<sup>338</sup> In this section, I explicitly construct a theory of pastoral care for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships to be used by pastoral caregivers, pastoral counselors, and parents. I envision wholeness of Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships featuring interrelating, multiple, changing, fluid, and just connections that can be overflowing in the Korean Christian immigrant family. Therefore, they can liberate themselves from certain fixed supposedly ideal images of parent-child relationships that are mostly based upon middle-class dominant U.S. parenting styles. I would like to celebrate the multiplicity within ourselves as parents and Korean Christian immigrant families. Moreover, I will provide more culturally-attuned practices of pastoral care that include the development of rituals like blessings, prayers, preaching, religious education, and psycho-educational groups like feminist relational cultural growth groups. Such rituals aim to empower and foster the connection among Korean Christian immigrant family members and possibly prevent potentially painful disconnection among them.

---

<sup>338</sup> Kathleen D. Billman, “Pastoral Care as an Art of Community,” in *The Arts of Ministry: Feminist-Womanist Approaches*, ed. Christie Cozad Neuger (Louisville, Ky.; Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 11.

### Ritual: Blessing for Leaving from Loving Home

More attuned pastoral care for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships is a blessing for Korean Christian immigrant family's immigration process, which entails leaving home. For Herbert Anderson and Kenneth Mitchell, the importance of children and childhood is derived from their understanding of leaving home.<sup>339</sup> They show that leaving home is a very important developmental task. It is related to basic development, identity formation, and identity reformation. In other words, leaving home is a crucial human life process. This leaving process is closely related to Anderson's and Mitchell's understanding of home. They believe that home is a physical place, a place of safety, a place for belonging, a gift that we never earn, and a place of transformation with God.<sup>340</sup> Home is a physical place but it is also our mental and emotional home. Therefore, home is where people start from. Anderson and Mitchell think that leaving home is a theological act. They believe that leaving home is the logical extension of the formation of a self that begins at birth; leaving home is necessary if one intends to form a new family; leaving home is a religious act; leaving home is necessary so that we can go home again; some people need to leave home in order to survive.<sup>341</sup> Likewise, home is an important physical and mental home to influence one's psychological and theological identity.

This important process of leaving home features individual and cultural differences. For example, the process of leaving home differs by individual. Sometimes, if one is abused and one's self-esteem is damaged, this person has a hard time leaving

---

<sup>339</sup> Herbert Anderson and Kenneth R. Mitchell, *Leaving Home*, 14.

<sup>340</sup> Herbert Anderson and Kenneth R. Mitchell, *Leaving Home*, 33-38.

<sup>341</sup> Herbert Anderson and Kenneth R. Mitchell, *Leaving Home*, 40-41.

home. Or sometimes, if adolescents are abused, they leave home early. Every individual's leaving is different. Also, culture-bound identity formation impacts one's ethnic loyalty. For example, "we are Vietnamese." When there is a cultural clash, ordinary transitions like leaving home are often superseded by crises of cultural transitions.<sup>342</sup> In addition to personal and cultural difference, there are troubling situations for leaving home. If there is no clear and healthy boundary, if there is no parental blessing, if there is no family to support, if there is a painful loss in one's family, leaving is not processed easily.<sup>343</sup> Insight, coping skills for change, noticing the change, and grieving the loss are required, and then one is able to leave the home.<sup>344</sup> This theological, developmental, and religious act of leaving home requires four blessings: a divine blessing, a blessing from an authority figure in the family, a blessing of ritual for the leaver's success, and a blessing of prayer for protection.<sup>345</sup> Immigration is a process of leaving home. Immigrants left their family homes and also their home country, extended family, and native land. Korean Christian immigrant parents leave their earned parental resources, like social and educational status, in their home country. Therefore, Anderson and Mitchell's pastoral theological reflection offer helpful insights for creating leaving home blessings to aid in family's healthy development.

The pain of leaving or losing home is addressed also by Namsoon Kang. Kang addresses the pain and the difficulty of finding home as a feminist theologian in a male-dominant arena. Moreover, she experiences isolation as a non-Western feminist theologian who writes her theology in English and critiques the West but writes for the

---

<sup>342</sup> Herbert Anderson and Kenneth R. Mitchell, *Leaving Home*, 58-65.

<sup>343</sup> Herbert Anderson and Kenneth R. Mitchell, *Leaving Home*, 89-105.

<sup>344</sup> Herbert Anderson and Kenneth R. Mitchell, *Leaving Home*, 128-133.

<sup>345</sup> Herbert Anderson and Kenneth R. Mitchell, *Leaving Home*, 107-108.

Western academy. She also feels homeless when she is placed in a non-Christian setting. These struggles remind her of the importance of a theological home for her self and for the security of theological identity. Although she celebrates the existence of the *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* as her academic home, she expresses feeling ostracized as a non-English user and a non-Western scholar.<sup>346</sup> The challenge of finding home for non-Western feminists working in the United States can foster challenges similar to the Korean Christian immigrant family's struggle.

African American pastoral theologian Lee Butler asserts the importance of leaving home for African American families by focusing on the challenges of racism, nurturing the extended African American family, and the healing of trauma.<sup>347</sup> Butler contends that searching for a place to be home is part of everyone's developmental process, as Anderson and Mitchell describe. Whether for immigrants or persons who never left their home country, searching for home is many African Americans' task. In addition to searching for a place to call home for physical, mental, psychological, and spiritual security, this task can cause more risks for people whose lives are more vulnerable, including Korean Christian immigrants or African Americans. Butler explains how jail becomes home for many African American men. Butler compares the African American male's experience of jail to that of living in a dungeon in West Africa. He writes:

We have been socially programmed for jail, estrangement, and genocide. Seemingly, we believe the only life we can have is the one we have been shown through our captivity. In the past, we were jailed in dungeons, cargo holds,

---

<sup>346</sup> Namsoon Kang, "Transit Home Away from Home," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 21, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 124-126.

<sup>347</sup> Lee H. Butler, Jr., *A Loving Home: Caring for African American Marriage and Families* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2000), 26-30.

slavocracy. We are now right back in the dungeons, only this time it is the American penal system and the cells of isolation we construct that reveal our unwillingness to be open and trusting. We are submitting to a vicious cycle of genocidal impulses. We are dying by our own hands from a system set in motion more than five hundred years ago.<sup>348</sup>

Butler offers a painful reflection on losing home or substituting jail for home for the many African American men who have been systematically oppressed. This makes me think about the challenge of finding home in relation to racism and the history of slavery of African American people. This demonstrates how not everyone leaves home for a more physically, psychologically, spiritually, or theologically secure means of existence.

Still, for Korean Christian immigrant families, leaving home in Korea, and finding another loving home in the States, requires tremendous care. One of Anderson and Mitchell's suggestions for leaving home in a healthful way is to provide blessings for people who leave home. I contend that Anderson's four suggestions—a divine blessing, a blessing from an authority figure in the family, a blessing of ritual for the leaver's success, and a blessing of prayer for protection—are relevant to newly departing and arriving Korean Christian immigrant families. Therefore, to assist the theological and spiritual transitions of Korean Christian immigrants in community, I suggest that the Korean Christian church send them forth with blessings as they transition to another faith community in the States where they can be held in love and acceptance. This continuous, guided blessing will increase their theological, spiritual, and psychological health, aid in the leaving home process, and eventually help their healthy grieving process and healthy settling down process.

---

<sup>348</sup> Lee H. Butler, Jr., *A Loving Home: Caring for African American Marriage and Families*, 35.  
282

What would such blessings entail? Elaine Ramshaw articulates the importance of sacred rituals in pastoral care. Blessing is one of many sacred rituals and it can be provided in different forms or sacraments. Ramshaw points out the role of ritual in human need. “If the proper ritual is provided, then humans can satisfy the need to establish order, the need to reframe meaning, the need to bond as a community, the need to handle ambivalence, and the need to handle mystery.”<sup>349</sup> Offering blessings to Korean Christian immigrant families can support their need to establish themselves in a foreign land, reframe immigration in a more theologically meaningful way, reinforce the need to enter a sacred bond with a new faith community, address the need to handle their ambivalence about the immigration process, and care for their need to feel connected with God. The use of blessings would help their immigration process seem to be guided by God’s care and comfort and thus offer increased theological and spiritual security which, in turn, can bring more peace, comfort, and security. Hopefully, this whole process will provide more security for newly immigrated Korean Christian families.

### Prayer

Like blessing, another form of sacred sacrament is prayer. In several places in this dissertation, I propose the usefulness of *Tongseong Gido* for releasing Korean Christian immigrant parents’ *Han*, suffering, and vulnerability. This way of releasing, opening up their *Han*, vulnerability, and suffering is another form of ritual in pastoral care. Elaine Ramshaw also mentions the importance of prayer as pastoral care and adds the importance of the setting and syntax of prayer, which may give the prayer added ritual authority. Also, the convention of prayer does not generally allow the parishioner to

---

<sup>349</sup> Elaine Ramshaw, *Ritual and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1997), 22-35.



question what the pastor says until the prayer is over. Therefore, though prayer is important pastoral care, a pastor or other pastoral caregiver also needs to listen to the careseeker's experience and desire from God. Therefore, the caregiver has to think about the importance of listening to a parishioner and being informed about what the careseeker wants from prayer.<sup>350</sup> In this regard, *Tongseong Gido* allows people to talk to God loudly, in their own words. It is a setting that allows Korean Christian families to release their *Han*, suffering, and vulnerability. From my experiences in *Tongseong Gido*, emotional expression can be easily attained. It resembles the experience of Jesus Christ at Gethsemane, when he pours his vulnerability before God, struggling to face his destiny of dying on the cross. Such emotionality in prayer can be easily replicated in *Tongseong Gido*.<sup>351</sup> *Tongseong Gido* can allow the release of emotional repression, and hopefully help heal suffering, vulnerability, and the *Han* of Korean Christian immigrant people. *Tongseong Gido* does not serve simply as an emotional catharsis. It offers significant potential for the deepening of Korean Christian people's spiritual lives and the strengthening of their divine connection with God. In order for one's spiritual connection with God to be deepened, it is helpful for *Tongseong Gido* to include listening to God as well as talking to God. In this way, *Tongseong Gido* can be a mutual way of communicating between Korean Christian people and God, instead of a one-way emotional catharsis.

---

<sup>350</sup> Elaine Ramshaw, *Ritual and Pastoral Care*, 59.

<sup>351</sup> The value of *Tongseong Gido* is not to argue for the release of Korean Christian's vulnerability without limits. There are people for whom the practice of *Tongseong Gido* would not be appropriate or valuable. Therefore, in Chapter Four, I include a different way of offering prayers between parents, Abraham and Sarah and Isaac through the re-telling of the Bible story.

Korean pastoral theologian Soo Young Kwon also asserts the power of ritual for the healing of *Han* and lays out its ritual syntax, which I will briefly describe later. Kwon poses an inevitable and unavoidable question in the Korean Christian context: he questions how we adapt the healing of *Han* to the structure of a “tri-partite personality”--spirit, soul, and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23)?<sup>352</sup> Kwon believes that *Han* is an embodied property that arises out of interpersonal relatedness. He goes on to construct a ritual for the healing of *Han*. From his understanding of ritual syntax (the ordering of ritual sequence), “usually there are formal rules specified by agent (shaman or Christian healer) act (call) and object (departed soul/evil).”<sup>353</sup> The specific content of such elements in each religious tradition does not depend on these rules. But, he found out that this recursive application of formal rules in healing rituals indicates a possibility of use of similar ritual syntax.<sup>354</sup> He points out the power of religious ritual and examines different religious traditions to argue that there are some similarities in the syntax of healing rituals. Therefore, to create a healing ritual for Korean Christian immigrant families, following this syntax will be helpful in the construction of a meaningful and healing ritual.

### Preaching

A majority of Korean Christian immigrant families attend church for a sense of social, psychological, and spiritual belonging. Preaching that offers education, healing, and connection with God is a powerful possibility for experiencing this sense of belonging. Elaine Ramshaw asserts that preaching can utilize our day-to-day experiences where there are all kinds of ethical and social justice issues occurring. The core of all

---

<sup>352</sup> Soo Young Kwon, “How Do Korean Rituals Heal?: Healing of Han as Cognitive Property,” *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 14, no. 1 (Spring, 2004): 32.

<sup>353</sup> Soo Young Kwon, “How Do Korean Rituals Heal?” 32.

<sup>354</sup> Soo Young Kwon, “How Do Korean Rituals Heal?” 32.

liturgical preaching for social justice is the connection between liturgy and justice as found in the biblical texts.<sup>355</sup> Many times, immigrants' lives entail the themes of chaos and journey. Because of the added burden of losing home, comfort food, and language, their life journeys might be more burdened in some ways. It is true that immigration life journeys can be much tougher than non-immigrants' lives.

However, if we can empower and reframe the meaning of this immigrant journey through the practice of preaching—spiritually-, theologically-, and biblically-empowered messages about day-to-day experiences—it will be a much different journey. Matthew D. Kim contends that the role of Korean American preachers is to empathize and theologically empower Korean Christian second-generation immigrants in light of their experiences of chaos, toward enabling them to experience their sojourn as a theologically positive and growing experience. He sees that most Korean Christian immigrants are going through chaos and the experience of sojourning. These experiences are both found in the Old Testament and can be the seed of spiritual growth.<sup>356</sup> Therefore, he sees the powerful role of Korean American preaching to be cultivating the development of possible Korean American selves from fear-driven identity to hoped-for relational and spiritual selves. The power of preaching to Korean Americans during their immigration journeys can result in equipping them for the journey with a sense of spiritual grounding. As I briefly mentioned before, Angella Son also highlights the important role of the Korean American church for empowering Korean American families and specifically warns about the powerful role of preaching. The message of self-sacrifice can damage

---

<sup>355</sup> Elaine Ramshaw, *Ritual and Pastoral Care*, 98.

<sup>356</sup> Matthew D. Kim, "Possible Selves: A Homiletic for Second Generation Korean American Churches," *Homiletic* 32, no. 1 (Summer 2007): 1-17.

Korean American women's healthy development and sense of an independent self.<sup>357</sup>

Preaching is a central part of how such messages are communicated. The frequency of preaching can be employed toward the empowerment of cultivating possible selves for Korean American second-generation immigrants, the development of women's independent sense of self, the empowering of most Korean Christian immigrant parents, and support for children toward experiences of spiritual growth. Therefore, preaching to Korean Christian immigrant populations requires the development of more culturally-attuned theology—the needs of persons living in the culture of immigration.

### Religious Education

Carol Lakey Hess proposes feminist religious education as “real talk” and “hard dialogue.” The goal of this model of education is for genuine connection to occur in communities of faith through honest and deep dialogue. Hess calls this model a conversational education model.”<sup>358</sup> Hess's emphasis is on the need for hard dialogue in order for deep and genuine connection to be fostered among women and girls in faith communities. She points out the patriarchal nature of theology and anthropology that reinforces the message of girls giving themselves away and reinforces the male-centered images of God that may negatively impact girls' ability to connect with such a God. She points out that such male-centered religious education abounds in faith communities. In contrast, Hess advocates cultivating and empowering small group movements in faith communities and encouraging the communal journey of women's and girl's development. Hess sees the vitality of the conversational education model in small groups for girls' and

---

<sup>357</sup> Angella Son, “*Pastoral Care of Korean American Women*,” 76.

<sup>358</sup> Carol Lakey Hess, “Education as an Art of Getting Dirty with Dignity,” in *The Arts of Ministry: Feminist-Womanist Approaches*, ed. Christie Cozad Neuger (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 64.

women's development enlivening their communities as well. Women's and girls' voices are validated and this brings an additional life-giving element to women's and girl's communities as well.

Hess's argument is valid for Korean Christian communities as well. It provides a way to foster Korean Christian immigrant mothers' empowerment toward their growth as individual persons—in a conversational group with other mothers, they can share their journeys and thus feel empowered by their growth as a self. If each woman is allowed to express and share her own story and her own growth, it can be a place where mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity are experienced positively. This conversational small group educational model can help fathers as well as mothers. If local faith communities are open for Korean American mothers and fathers to share their journeys, there will be greater opportunity to educate, heal, and grow as a healthier, more connected person, and also as a parent. It will be also helpful for children if the local faith community is open to developing family intimacy, such as through church family retreats, so that both parents and children can be invited to a dialogical educational model for family intimacy and empowerment.

S. Steve Kang points out the significant role of religious education for the development of healthy Korean American young adults.<sup>359</sup> He asserts that the role of religious education for Korean American young adults is three-fold. First, the church is a safe, hospitable community for Korean American second-generation youth to explore their multiple selves. Second, the Korean American church is a place for them to explore

---

<sup>359</sup> S. Steve Kang, "The Socioculturally Constructed Multivoiced Self as a Framework for Christian Education of Second-Generation Korean American Young Adults," *Religious Education* 97, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 94.

the serious influences of the sociocultural context upon them. Third, religious education for Korean American second-generation needs to be imaginative and creative.<sup>360</sup> Kang utilizes Maria Harris's spirituality of pedagogy to envision a curriculum that allows youth to experience reflexivity in their lives at the church. Maria Harris discusses Koinonia (community), Leiturgia (prayer), Didache (teaching), Kerygma (proclamation), Diakonia (proclamation), Diakonia (service), Oikonomia (stewardship) as functions comprising a holistic curriculum of the church.<sup>361</sup> These functions encourage empowerment and allow religious education in the Korean American church to raise challenging issues, such as the dichotomy between clergy and laity, the role of women in ministry, and other issues created by hierarchical alienation in the church as well as in Korean American culture. Because Harris presupposes mutuality and equality of relationship in her curriculum, hierarchy and dichotomy—such as that resulting from a male-centered ethos and clergy-centered leadership—are seen as unhealthy and problematic. Even though there are still challenges in Korean American churches to implement educational models with values like those advocated by Kang and Harris, it remains a necessity to modify and implement such educational models within Korean American churches today. Generally speaking, Korean American churches have a tendency toward male-centered and clergy-centered ways of being; however, there is diversity and multiplicity within each church culture. Therefore, simply starting a dialogue about the vision for these educational models for the well-being of Korean American children as well as the potential impact on the well-being of whole family could be prophetic. Since Korean American church culture also

---

<sup>360</sup> S. Steve Kang, "The Socioculturally Constructed Multivoiced Self," 94.

<sup>361</sup> Maria Harris, *Fashion Me A People: Curriculum in the Church* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989).

respects the family as one of the most important values, members may listen if the value of children's and family's well-being is suggested.

Therefore, based upon these challenges and insights, religious education in Korean American churches needs to work toward the healthy development of self in young girls and boys, as well as support parents' healthy development of self and relationship. One of Kang's points is that since the church environment is a safe and holding place for many Korean Americans, they yearn for deep connection in church small group as well as holistic church curriculum as a whole. By using education in this sacred place, Korean Christian immigrant parents and children can all share their journey together.

#### Psychoeducational Groups: Relational Cultural Growth Groups for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships

In addition to the importance of religious education, I would like to address psychoeducational approaches to strengthen Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Through my own clinical and congregational experiences, I realize the importance of the small group approach, which usually leads congregation members to share their stories and gain empowerment for their immigration journeys. I will utilize Howard Clinebell's concept of growth groups, and Relational Cultural Therapy's suggestions for therapeutic treatment of ethnic minorities, in order to create a psychoeducational model that I will call "Relational Cultural Growth Groups for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent-Child Relationships." Small groups that allow young people and adults to talk about their own identity development will be helpful. However, just sharing their identities is not enough to help and empower Korean Christian immigrant parents and children in their relationships. From my experience, not because of pathology,

but because of lack of knowledge in a new land, parents lose their sense of esteem and confidence in their performance as parents. Therefore, in order to help parents become relationally and culturally competent, while at the same time avoiding pathology, I assert the combined techniques and wisdom from both theory and practice.

The concept of growth groups was developed by Howard J. Clinebell, Jr.<sup>362</sup> The concept of a growth group is to awaken potential for full development, and it offers instruments for enlivening individuals and relationships.<sup>363</sup> This goal of this growth model is to facilitate the maximum development of a person's possibilities at each stage of the life cycle. Developing well-led, inexpensive and accessible groups is a high priority for the development of healthy communities.<sup>364</sup> A growth model, which includes counseling and education, facilitates individuals' journeys to liberate themselves from whatever is blocking their growth toward wholeness. This growth model tries to overcome pathology-oriented models rooted in traditional psychoanalysis and in contrast focuses on the here and now, positive aspects of life, and the growth of one's life.<sup>365</sup>

Clinebell focuses on the wholeness of one's well-being or health in every area of life—one's mind, body, relationships with others, within the biosphere or ecosystem, in groups and institutions that sustain growth, and in the spiritual dimension. His goal is growth not only at the individual level but expanding to the social, ecological, and spiritual realms. The goal of growth groups is holistic growth.

Also, Clinebell emphasizes the importance of the role of the church. He argues that church has the capacity to be salugenetic—health and growth-producing—as well as

---

<sup>362</sup> Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., *Growth Groups* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), 3.

<sup>363</sup> Howard Clinebell, *Growth Groups*, 3.

<sup>364</sup> Howard Clinebell, *Growth Groups*, 9.

<sup>365</sup> Howard Clinebell, *Growth Groups*, 3.



pathogenic—sickness-producing and growth-blocking. The church's task is to be a center of wholeness that liberates rather than blocks growth potential. Pastoral growth counseling draws on the church's rich growth traditions in its effort to become salugenic.<sup>366</sup> Therefore, Clinebell highlights all human potential for growth, focuses on holistic growth, and sees the importance of the role of the church for the healthy growth of congregation.

Clinebell describes how relationships can facilitate and inhibit growth.

Growth occurs in relationship in which there is mutual feeding of the basic heart-hungers—the hunger for love, affirmation, freedom, pleasure, adventure, meaning. Shallow, manipulative relating (which is all that many people do), blocks growth and damages self esteem. If such I-it relationships dominate one's early life, the growth drive becomes encrusted in defensiveness and fear; resistance to growth becomes intense. Growth-stimulating relationships are warm, caring, and trustful at the same time that they are honest, confronting, and open. Caring + confrontation=growth! This is the growth formula.<sup>367</sup>

His definition of growth gives hope for our holistic growth. Clinebell's trust in holistic growth, the role of church, and his definition of healthy growth are all helpful elements in creating a psychoeducational group for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships.

However, Clinebell's positive outlook fails to go far enough. It does not give enough attention specifically to churches' contributions to a lack of safety and to shallow manipulative relating. In other words, not all churches are functioning as healthy, supportive, and safe environments for all. Because of the dual nature of Korean immigrant churches—their simultaneous positive and negative influence on the lives of

---

<sup>366</sup> Howard Clinebell, Jr. *Growth Counseling: Hope-Centered Methods of Actualizing Human Wholeness* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 9-101. E.P. Wimberly, "Growth Counseling," in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, gen. ed Rodney J. Hunter (Nashville, Abingdon, 1990), 483.

<sup>367</sup> Howard Clinebell, *Growth Groups*, 8.

Korean immigrants—Clinebell and I may have a somewhat different understanding of the role of church. Korean immigrant churches function with a crucially supportive role in the lives of many congregants. However, like any human reality and institution, the influence of the church's ambivalence, complexity, and multiplicity in ministry and dynamics are all presupposed. Therefore, admitting the importance of the church does not guarantee absolute positivism in church, or even in the growth groups I call for, as Clinebell seems to assert.

Therefore, I would like to combine the insights of Clinebell with the values of Relational Cultural Theory, which validates the complexity of human reality by an understanding of self-formation as influenced by sexism, racism, gender identity, and multiculturalism. RCT takes into account the importance of social context for one's identity formation and relationships. As I have explained in earlier chapters, RCT is developed by feminist psychotherapists and clinicians who posit the importance of human liberation within the ongoing reality of a complex web of oppressions. RCT's therapeutic model for ethnic minorities is a helpful guideline to include within psychoeducational groups for addressing the impact of oppression on Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. This guideline emphasizes the importance of one's minority identity in relation to social context.

The guidelines of the RCT therapeutic model for ethnic minorities are discussed by Clewonne W. Turner. Turner points out the benefit of RCT for therapy with ethnic minority persons and relationships, and she suggests some guidelines particularly for therapy with African American clients. As an African American clinician, she introduces some of the key issues to be dealt with in counseling ethnic minority persons: 1)

collective history of client's different culture; 2) personal history; 3) working through impasses; 4) an ideal society; 5) anger; 6) guilt; 7) politics; 8) inability to manage conflict; 9) fear of loss of the self; 10) inability to accept difference.<sup>368</sup> It seems to be particularly important for the therapist to understand the client's ethnic background and the cultural context in which he or she lives. Getting the client to think about what constitutes an ideal society, compared to the reality in which she is living, seems to be a paradoxical strategy, but one necessary for healing.<sup>369</sup> Maureen Walker points out the challenge of offering therapy for racial minorities, particularly the necessity of: understanding the "power over" culture in which the client lives; helping the client to explore the collective biography of the client's ethnic minority group and its relation to the client's image of relationship; its impact on the formation of a relational sense of self.<sup>370</sup>

Below I offer an example of how RCT can be used toward the healing of a Korean American client in pastoral psychotherapy. The set of questions developed and articulated below will be beneficial as well for education and exploration in Korean Christian immigrant parents' growth groups. What I aim to do in this case study is to show how a caregiver can emphasize the value of growth for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships, use the church to empower and educate Korean Christian immigrant families, and use religious education for healing. This religious education needs to include: 1) a developed set of interrelating values; 2) a developed set of

---

<sup>368</sup> Cleovonne W. Turner, "Psychosocial Barriers to Black Women's Career Development," in *Women's Growth in Diversity*, ed. Judith V. Jordan et al (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 162-175.

<sup>369</sup> Cleovonne W. Turner, "Psychosocial Barriers to Black Women's Career Development," 162-175.

<sup>370</sup> Maureen Walker, "Race, Self, and Society: Relational Challenges in a Culture of Disconnection," in *The Complexity of Connection*, ed. Judith V. Jordan et al. (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 92-101.

questions for ethnic minority congregants; 3) the value of holistic growth; 4) the value of social context for one's formation of self; 5) the value of both positive and realistic aims from the combined values of the three Korean concepts for parenting and RCT's three concepts for relationships.

I propose to use insights from those combined values toward the integration of Clinebell's growth group model and the RCT model to create psychoeducational material. In the future, I intend to create a relational cultural growth model for Korean Christian immigrant parenting groups (or family groups or separate groups for parents and youth). My goals are to let the group educate one another about their history of immigration, their social and ethnic identity, and how their social and ethnic identities influence their social functioning and family relating, especially as parents. Also, I expect to use Clinebell's emphasis on health and growth as a frame for viewing the immigration experience positively. In other words, based upon his emphasis on health and growth, I can claim immigration to be a growth opportunity that presupposes positive attitudes. This stance will make it more possible to approach this group and encourage their potential growth. Along with this growing process, I will take steps to develop these groups into a relatively safe place for their mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity. In order to create a safe environment for this group, confidentiality, normalization, a positive attitude toward growing, and warmth and caring through the group process will be necessary. If they can utilize the developed set of questions for developing interrelating values, this will be a chance for parents, youth, and families to process their perceptions and experiences of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* in their family relationships. Depending on the nature of the group, it can be a psychoeducational group for parenting, a family growth

group, or a youth-only group. In this psychoeducational model, I hope that Korean Christian immigrant parents and children can grow and acknowledge the impasses they face, and find a way to process their vulnerability so that this process can be an empowering and preventative program for Korean Christian immigrant families.

#### Relational Cultural Growth Pastoral Counseling: A Case Study

This section seeks to show concretely how to care for Korean Christian immigrant families so that they are supported to address Mutual Respect (*Hyo* +Mutuality), Transformative Suffering (*Han* + Vulnerability) and Authentic *Jeong* (*Jeong* + Authenticity). This counseling situation is a composite of my clinical experiences in caring for such families.

#### Vignette: A Single Korean Christian Immigrant Parent in Court-Mandated Counseling

The client is a 55-year-old Korean American male who has lived in the United States for over 35 years. He immigrated in order to study in the United States and later decided to marry a Korean American woman. After 10 years of marriage, his wife suddenly left home and filed for divorce. After six months, his divorce was finalized and he had to be resilient in order to parent his two daughters. Because his parents were both teachers, he was taught that an ideal family is filial, with sacrificial parents and obedient children. Due to his Confucian family background, his parents perceived divorce as an unimaginable thing; thus, he could not go back to Korea as a *Bul Hyo Ja* (dis-filial son) and disgrace his family's honor. He was very angry at his ex-wife, who he felt was not sacrificial at all for her children, since she left the marriage because she was in love with another man. His sense of shame and family disgrace, his sense of *Bul Hyo*, became his deep sense of *Han*. He failed at his life, and he cannot go back to his country to see his

parents. His deep sense of disconnection with his parents caused him much suffering, because he was raised in a very caring family. The cultural factors are made even more powerful by his personal tendency toward perfectionism, rendering his divorce a seemingly un-recoverable vulnerability for him to bear in relation to Korea and his parents. He tries to put aside his deep suffering as a divorced single parent and instead has made it his life goal to become a good father for his daughters, who are now the only deep human connections in his life. His deep parental *Jeong* came from his family of origin, which provided all kinds of care without maintaining the boundaries so common in the West. His parents, especially his mother, provided extensive care, even when he did not ask for it. He felt bothered sometimes; but he knew that that was how his mother expressed her love for him in the name of maternal *Jeong*. Since he wanted to become a good parent as a way to compensate for the loss of his wife, he wanted to be both father and mother for his children. He deeply missed the love of his parents, *Jeong* for him. However, he felt that he could not go back to Korea. Thus, he saw himself from his two daughters' perspective. He tried to become everything, like both mother and father, for his two daughters. If he remembered his own childhood, he received significant *Jeong* from both parents, especially from his mother. He wanted to provide *Jeong* that he received from his parents to his own children even though they did not have their own mother. Parenting for his two daughters became his interwoven *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*.

In order to provide the best care that he could provide, he changed his job from director of a sales department to being a small business owner, which allowed him more flexibility in the use of his time for child-rearing. All he wanted in life were three things:

1) to be a good Christian for himself and for his children; 2) to rear his two daughters as perfectly as possible as a single father; 3) and to send them to good colleges.

Finally, he sent his first daughter to college, where she lived in the dorm. At that time his second daughter was a junior in high school. One night he was waiting for her to return home, and she was late. When she arrived at home, he asked her why she was late. She did not answer and tried to get in the house. He was angry and tried to get her to answer. But she didn't answer. He was trying to grab his daughter's shoulder to make her stop and make her answer, but at the same time, she turned her face to her father's side. His hand accidentally hit her right cheek. He felt sorry for hitting his daughter, and they both thought of it as an accident. The next day, he went to school to pick up his daughter, and in front of her school he was confronted by police officers. A lot of students and parents witnessed his arrest. In fact, his daughter had a bruise on her cheek so, as required by law, her teacher reported this to Child Protective Services. The police treated it as if it was an emergency case. Once this happened, his second daughter was shocked and his college daughter came home to help.

His ex-wife did not want to help with the situation even though she lived only 20 minutes away from their household. The father was required by the court to finish a 52-session parenting education course and to receive counseling. He wanted to receive education and counseling from a Korean Christian counselor; despite his search, it seemed there were no available Korean Christian counselors. Then, he found me at the church where I worked as pastoral counseling minister. He requested that I be the counselor for this court-mandated parenting counseling. Because I work at a church facility, he automatically assumed I am a Christian counselor. After I defined myself as a

pastoral counselor using a church facility, we started the counseling, using the Korean language.

At the first session, he was full of anger, and expressed it through his rigid facial expressions and low tone of voice. He articulated that he did not want to trust any legal system, because he felt it has betrayed him. Also, he did not want to talk about his daughters because he felt they had betrayed him, too. He reported at the first session that he didn't trust anyone and he could not trust me as a counselor—he perceived me as a part of the legal system that betrayed him. He reported that I exercised power over him, based upon the fact that if my evaluations were not positive it would prevent him from being able to finish his counseling requirement. Basically, what he wanted was to get a positive progress report and finish his court order.

#### Relational Cultural Growth Counseling for Korean Christian Immigrant Parent

For this section, I would like to highlight how relational cultural growth model counseling can heal, support, and empower a Korean single parent in court-mandated counseling whose life has been dedicated to his children as a result of his accumulated sense of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*. His deep yearning for connection with his daughter was eventually betrayed, he felt, by the social system. Consequently, he lost his motivation for life and connection with his daughters. I would like to explain how my relational cultural growth counseling model affected my approach to this client. I presuppose the definition of growth as posited by Howard Clinebell and the same steps for relational cultural growth group. However, in the case discussion, there will be more detailed and specific use of counseling skills from both growth-counseling and relational cultural theories. I will also use interrelating values as a part of this therapeutic approach. The



following does not offer an exact sequence of what occurred in the therapeutic relationship. Rather, what I offer below demonstrates the values and techniques that can be used to heal this client. *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong* will be addressed through the client's sharing of stories. Mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity are evident in the therapist's responses and techniques. Also, I categorize this case study with interrelating values of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*. Definitions of and detailed approaches associated with these interrelating values as evidenced in previous chapters will be helpful for the reader's understanding of this case study.

#### Starting a Connection with Strongly Resistant Client who Demonstrates Authentic *Jeong*

Since the client had a significant amount of hurt, resistance, and vulnerability, I chose to begin speaking with Authentic *Jeong*, which shows my authentic emotions of care, appreciation, and support for a single father. I tried to connect with his emotional state and his need to be loved, cared for, and protected.

"You have worked so hard as a single father. I am so amazed by what you have done, and what you sacrificed for the life for your children." He was stunned by my appreciation, support, and empathy because, in his mind, I am a part of system that has betrayed and hurt him. His face and eyes were a bit wet, and he sat in silence. He did not say a word because of his overwhelming emotions. His emotional vulnerability made my heart break, too. I continued:

I cannot imagine how much you are hurt, scared, and threatened by the betrayals of all the people around you. I might be part of a system that makes you feel uncomfortable to open your mouth and speak something from your heart. It is OK to take a moment. Just be here and feel your emotions. As a mother of two daughters, I feel deep compassion and pain for you.

I felt deep compassion for the difficulty of being vulnerable with a Korean Christian female counselor. I felt small tears escape from my eyes. According to RCT, therapist's vulnerability and expression of honest emotion and self-disclosure is often helpful for connection and providing empathy. My vulnerability and self-disclosure invited the client to relax and simply be at that moment. After a while, the client stated: "I never expected to have this kind of conversation. Because I thought you would treat me as other educators did in other institutions." Then, he continued to share his experience of being at the parenting classes. "There was a group of people who were all court-mandated. There was just one educator who talked about all the skills and techniques of how to become a good parent. However, those skills were not helpful at all because I actually provided better care for my children."

#### Deeper Connection with Transformative Suffering

The client didn't understand why he needed parenting classes because he believed that he was the best caregiver. I realized that he needed to release his sense of *Han* as a court-mandated client and a devoted single parent. I chose my words in an effort to explore his sense of *Han*. I continued to offer *Jeong* and also began to invite him to express his *Han*.

I wish I could hear your life story. It sounds like you have been a very devoted parent, but how can you now support yourself without being supported by other extended family members? Did you say that you changed your job, and you provided all organic food for your children's meals? Wow, I cannot imagine how you are so dedicated to your family. How did you manage your stress?

"Yes. I do have lots of *Han*. Yes. I do have a *Han*-ridden life," he answered.

Without my asking or directly addressing his *Han*-ridden experience, he naturally used the word *Han* when he was asked to share about this stress in his life. "Yes," he said,

"immigrant life. It can be a *Han*-ridden life, can't it? What about you? Do you also have a *Han*-ridden life as you mentioned?" I responded relationally, with my self-disclosure serving as a guide for his own exploration of *Han*, of vulnerability in his life, without pressuring him to share his *Han*. I shared my own *Han*-ridden experiences, including a lack of English competence as an immigrant parent and a lack of support from extended family as a busy immigrant parent and graduate student.

He then shared further his *Han*-ridden life as a Korean immigrant single father who sacrificed himself to be a good father. Despite his sacrifice, he ended up accused of being an abusive father by his daughter, by his daughter's friends, by her teacher, by his fellow parents, and by the U.S. court system. His sharing of *Han* was affirmed and validated by my emotionally honest and attuned responses. For example, I used Korean expressions in an effort to increase the level of empathy for sharing *Han*.

Yes, it does sound like your life is so *Han*-ridden. (정말 한 많은 인생이셨군요)  
Yes, like an old Korean saying, when a woman is *Han*-ridden, snow comes in June. Have ever felt like your life is so *Han*-ridden? Like there is snow in June?  
(여자가 한을 품으면, 오뉴월에도 서리가 내린다는데, 정말 당신의 인생도 그렇게 힘든 일이 많았나요? 오뉴월에 서리가 내릴 정도로?)

In this way of providing empathy, a therapist, while remaining conscious of and ready to acknowledge her power, also attempts to enter into a relationship of shared power, for example, by abandoning use of all technical clinical language for describing the client's pain, stress, and vulnerability. The conversation then becomes more culturally-attuned, conversational, and naturally invites more stories from the client about the deepest pain in his life. Then, the word *Han* becomes a natural part of conversational language, and this opens the gateway for the client and therapist to access the client's

vulnerability without shame (in most cases). After he shared about his *Han*-ridden life as a single parent, he did ask a question.

“I will have lots of stories of *Han*. Then, can I talk about my ex-wife since this is a parenting counseling?”

“I think it is a very related topic. Go ahead and I will listen.” I accepted his suggestion and choice of topic in order to empower his sense of intersubjectivity in the therapeutic dialogue. I intended to use mutual respect within the therapeutic relationship, because I am aware of the impact of power dynamics. Since the client experienced a series of disempowering events, I think this was a helpful moment for him to feel empowered, and it thus led him to continue to share his *Han*-ridden life in relation to his ex-wife.

He shared how angry he was even as he was still missing his ex-wife, how sacrificial he was as a single father, how much he was a workaholic for his families' survival, how much he had been living like a machine for over a decade. After he shared his *Han*-ridden stories about himself and his relationship with his wife, he then talked about how he loved his wife. He spoke about how he was loved by his parents. He talked about the *Jeong* experiences of his life. I asked about his experience of his parents' *Jeong* for him and how he expressed his *Jeong* to his children. From this conversation, he was surprised how similar his parental *Jeong* was in comparison with his mother's *Jeong*.

Suddenly, he talked about how *Han*-ridden he was when he was reported to Child Protective Services by his daughter's teacher. He talked about how painful his court experience was, how unimaginable it was, in his *Hyo* culture, to be reported by his

daughter. He questioned how any child could ever report a parent to the legal system.<sup>371</sup>

He was deeply violated by the power of the U.S. legal system and, at the same time, he could not imagine moving forward as a father to his daughters. Due to his loss of face, his shame, he could not stand as a man before his daughters. His disempowered sense of parental authority of *Hyo* conveyed his daughters' disrespect, his failure as parent, and his failure in life. All of these were evidence of his *Han*-ridden life. As a result, he did not have anywhere to stand as a person with dignity. Based upon his experiences of Korean culture, he could never imagine his daughter's betrayal by reporting him to the legal system. Abandoned by his wife, he decided not to go back to Korea due to his duty to be *Hyo Ja*, and facing his daughter entailed *Bu Hyo Nyo*. Now he lived with an overwhelming sense of disgrace, loss of face, and loss of dignity. He shared:

She is supposed to follow my guidance and be obedient. I feel so shamed about being reported by my daughter. Now I cannot even show my face to my two daughters. My authority is broken, and I cannot save my face. How can I see my two daughters? I may live with them, but I am not going to be the same father any more. Our relationship has been totally broken.

After sharing of his *Han*-ridden stories, I asked him to think about how his *Han*-ridden experiences related to his parenting. He started to talk about his daughter's *Han*-ridden story as a Korean immigrant American daughter with a single father. He stated:

I think she must be very stressed these days. She was preparing for the party, and she wanted to call up her mother. Her mother was not willing to help her because she was busy with her little daughter. My daughter is a very good kid but she must have been very stressed that night. I could have been more rational that night based on all these reasons. But, when she didn't turn her face to me right away, I took it as disobedience against me. Me, who sacrificed my whole life for her. At that moment, I felt like

---

<sup>371</sup> He was aware that he was reported by his child's school teacher, but at times he stated that it was his daughter who reported him based on her comments to the teacher.

my parental authority was disregarded and my whole life was not recognized.

#### After Offering Empathy for His *Han*—Mutual Respect

Once his *Han* was empathized with, he was able to see his daughter's *Han* too. This was the moment when he was able to use his painful suffering as a lens to see his daughter's suffering and was able to use his pain, suffering, and *Han* to connect with his daughter's pain, suffering, and *Han* and for a foundational experience, for a deeper and reflective connection. I call it Transformative Suffering.

After several sessions spent creating a safe space for sharing his *Han* and his daughter's *Han*, I helped him to develop a sense of Transformative Suffering to name his painful experiences and let him connect with his daughter's pain. The sessions continued by considering his other sources of brokenness, including his broken parental authority and broken parental connection with his daughter. This broken parental authority helped him to think about where his authority came from. He reported: "As a Korean son, I presupposed that parents are like Heaven. I was a very obedient son, and I have never thought of disobeying my parents. How come my child broke this parental authority and paternal connection (*Bu Jeong*)?" He was asked to think about his own presuppositions in relation to his Korean upbringing. He was asked to think about when his daughter gained this Korean cultural perception of parental authority, as if it came from Heaven, while living in the States? He was also asked how his daughter could ever learn about the Korean way of *Bu Jeong* (paternal love) or *Mo Jeong* (maternal love) which mostly are represented in the media, daily living, and in the literature for Korean children? I reminded him of one of the famous Korean advertisements about *Jeong* that has been used for a bread company for several decades: "We know it when we don't say...It is

called “*Jeong*.” Do you still remember this ad?,” I asked? “How can your daughter ever learn about this *Jeong* culture without being exposed to the Korean culture like you, me, or any other Korean kids?”

#### The Formation of Self in Social Context According to RCT

From these questions, he and I were able to talk about how Korean and dominant U.S. cultures are different in terms of parental authority, hierarchy, individuality, and parent-child relationships. From our educative and reflective sharing time, he was able to notice the change between Korean culture and the style of parenting dominant in the United States. He could understand his daughter’s limited perception about the differences between her father’s Korean culture and her U.S. culture. From this process, after ten sessions, he was able to feel deep compassion for his daughter as well as for himself. He and I were able to talk about the difference between his expectation that his daughter be filial daughter and his expectation that his daughter be independent and even equal. The cultural and social impacts on one’s identity formation were addressed. Therefore, RCT’s guidelines for therapy with ethnic minority clients were used to talk about the following: his history of immigration; past impasse experiences; his Korean ethnic identity and its influence on his relational patterns; and how to manage impasses as an immigrant. This session seemed to be helpful for him to understand his identity and his daughter’s identity.

#### Request for Initiating Connection: Use of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering and Authentic *Jeong*

One day, he asked how he could start a conversation with his daughters about his changes and reflections. I said to him, “You may use your parental authority in a different way. You may use your parental authority to respect your daughter’s power as a mutual

member of the family. For example, instead of saying, 'Let's have dinner tonight,' you might say, 'Do you have time tonight for dinner? If you cannot, we can change the date to later.'" He understood the point that I was trying to make. Beginning at that dinner with his two daughters, he was able to start to use Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*. He respected his daughters as mutually important family members. He understood his own pain as a way to understand his daughter's pain, and he used his awareness for a new quality of connection with his family. He also tried to be emotionally attuned to his daughters' needs and conversation, and see himself as a different self. He used to see a family as one unit, but he now wants to make a safe space for himself and for his daughters, because he experienced how his unmanaged emotions deeply hurt himself and his daughter. Now, he understands the cost and benefit of being reported for his behavior.

At dinner, both daughters were also able to share their stories of *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*. They both shared how much they were yearning for family mutuality under their father's hierarchy. They expressed that they wanted to help their father as mutual family members; but their father had not allowed them to grow, always taking care of everything on his own. Therefore, for years they missed a healthy sense of individuality, separation, and distance due to their father-fused connection, fused identity, and fused love and hate, which was also called *Jeong* in their father's words. They missed sharing how difficult it was living with a father as a daughter, but they could not find a place of vulnerability due to their father's high expectations for academic achievement. Once their father listened to their *Han*, they both poured out their fears regarding when their father was arrested. They shared how much they were scared, regretted the incident, and feared that they were



losing family connection. They shared how much they missed their father's care. Their accidental violence ended up as a painful but rewarding event and resulted in their reunification as a family with deeper connection.

The reporting stirred up stories of *Hyo, Han, Jeong*, mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity. Interrelating values were used for healing their pain and growth. The therapist's intentional use of mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity were beneficial for the client's healing and growth.

At the end of their dinner conversation, this is what the father said to them:

It felt great having dinner with my daughters. I am so glad that I shared how painful it was to raise you as a single immigrant father, and I shared how much it hurt to be reported. I'm glad that I worked so hard to understand what happened to me, to my daughters, and I am eventually getting help for my self understanding, and the value of my life and my children's life. I will not sacrifice my life anymore, and I want to enjoy my life too. I am so sorry to push you too much. It is my fault.

After my client shared this, his two daughters were in tears and apologized for not being good enough daughters. They wanted to support their father's passion for his life and self care. This was the moment when my client was able to use Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and finally experience a deeper connection in his relationship with his two daughters.

When he finished his therapy with me, he mentioned,

I really didn't expect that I would receive this kind of care from you. I thought I would only be judged and educated to become a better parent. But, you made me think about how great, sacrificial, and *Han*-ridden immigrant parenting has been for my children. No matter how hard I tried to be perfect, it became a burden to my children. Now, I see that was the problem. I think I spent too much energy for my children and my children were burdened by that. Now, I will start a new fellowship group at the church, and maybe find a girlfriend to hang out with. Thank you so much for your understanding of me as a person. I feel like I am having a conversation with an old friend. Can I call you back if I want to talk?

This client left my office with a warm smile, and he confessed that being reported by his daughter was a pain and a blessing. Hopefully, after 52 weeks of mandated parenting counseling, he will use this experience of Transformative Suffering for Authentic *Jeong* for his family.

### Ending the Therapy

Relational cultural growth counseling involves two people in the art of growing and healing. I met this client and helped him to grow and heal as a person and as a parent. At the same time, this client's story made me grow and heal as a therapist, a person, and a parent. I am also a Korean Christian immigrant parent. I want to give my deep appreciation to all of my clients who challenged me and made me grow and heal in a deeper connection in my own life through our therapeutic relationship. This is a composite case. However, it is compiled from numerous real stories from my own practice with Korean Christian immigrant parents. I provide pastoral counseling, and their participation in this therapeutic relationship makes me reflect upon my own internal journey as a Korean Christian immigrant parent. I would like to share some previously unaddressed reflections and appreciation of the value of relational cultural growth pastoral counseling for my own healing and growth.

As a child raised in a household with domestic violence, I know how much authoritarian parental power can damage a child's spirit and well-being. As a Korean Christian immigrant parent, I know how much fear my client had to bear in order to deal with this sudden, painful legal process. As a pastoral counselor for this Korean Christian immigrant parent mandated by the court to receive counseling, I identify and connect with him in multiple ways. When he shared his loving childhood experience of being

cared for by his well-educated and loving parents, I felt deep pain in my heart as I reflected on how to connect those loving, caring parental images in my own psyche and body. When he talked about his pain as an abandoned husband, I stood in the middle, thinking and feeling the pain of my client and the pain of his ex-wife, whom I have never met; nonetheless, I tried to imagine a mother and wife who would suddenly leave her family. Why? But I had my own sympathy, empathy, and interpathy for her based in my own imagination. When he talked about the pain of their daughters, I visualized my own daughter Jane's face. This image made me tear deep inside while I listened to his story.

When he talked about his joy at being treated as a person with dignity, I remember Dr. Susan Nelson, who treated me as a person with dignity when I went through my own legal complication to secure a green card. When I was treated as a criminal by the immigration officer, Dr. Nelson, who had social authority, warmed my heart and supported me as a person with dignity. Dr. K. Samuel Lee, who advocated on my behalf when the Immigration Officer called him, was a true pastoral caregiver for me. I know how difficult and painful it is for Korean immigrants to go through legal complications.<sup>372</sup> This client's story makes me cry inside again, and makes me think about the importance of providing human dignity for this vulnerable person.

When he finally talked about his fault and responsibility for this incident, I felt joyful inside. Without pressuring or educating, I dearly wanted his subjective will to see himself in perspective. My role as a pastoral counselor was to provide and nurture "his growth" from a growth counseling perspective. I felt he was growing in his awareness of

---

<sup>372</sup> The marginal experience of international students and undocumented residents in the United States is yet another topic to consider, but is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

self and familial relationships. He was growing in his capacity to see this past that can still impact his present and future.

Healing takes place when someone grows to see her or his own problems. This client's ability to identify his own problem evidences his growth and healing. I felt he grew and I grew together. A therapist and client work mutually through shared vulnerability and shared authenticity of self. A therapist and client share *Hyo*, *Han*, and *Jeong*. We experience the power of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* in our care and our growth.

Well, did I provide parenting counseling? Yes. Did I do that? I think I did. He finally experienced himself as very affective and authoritative, very sacrificial, and very democratic. He sometimes had a hard time controlling his anger, but he tried to adopt a healthier control of his anger and emotions through the use of self care. His parenting style is changing and is now out of the boxes that had confined him. His parenting takes multiple forms, depending on time, situations, and his mood. Can we name a specific parenting style that is best for him? Do we need to teach a specific parenting style to any parent? It may be helpful to do so, but my emphasis was on helping him to find who he is as a person, and as a parent. My emphasis was on the possibility of multiplicity in his self and fatherhood, on not being captive to any one style of parenting. My emphasis was on helping him to understand that his capacity to express himself in multiple ways is both powerful and dangerous. Once he realizes what kind of power and weakness he has, he will slowly figure out when to use it or not.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I provide a feminist pastoral theology of connection, pastoral care, and counseling. I conclude that a feminist pastoral theology of connection is interrelating, multiple, changing, fluid, and just. Interrelating values that I developed include Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong*. They serve as an example of how to dance with multiple cultures in the complexities of Korean Christian immigrant life. Also, a feminist pastoral theology of connection asserts a multiple, changing, and fluid connection. It is hard to stereotype or categorize anything. This is especially true in parent-child relationships, as they are day-to-day and entail multiple layers in which all human beings play a part. It is, therefore, both important and challenging to define and maintain parent-child relationships. A feminist pastoral theology of connection asserts this multiple, changing, and fluid parent-child relationship as a given reality. Given this reality, it is time to develop a more realistic and fluid sense of what good growth-promoting parenting entails. Without this room, there are certain idealistic myths about ideal parental images and even divine images that can haunt most parents. Last, even though we need to admit multiple, changing, and fluid connections, it has to be justice-oriented. Without justice in Korean Christian immigrant families, many voices will remain oppressed under these multiple, changing, and fluid connectional systems.

In order to actualize this theological reflection at the realistic level, I suggest more culturally-attuned pastoral care for Korean Christian immigrant parents and children. Through blessings, prayers, and religious education, most Korean Christian immigrant families will benefit by being educated about their Korean culture, immigration, and self-development. Also, for relational cultural growth groups, people who want parenting

education, Korean Christian immigrant parents, and children are supported for their growth as more aware and better equipped parents, children, and youth.

Also, people who choose relational cultural growth counseling will be introduced to a deep level of finding who they are and who they can be, with social, cultural, psychological, and theological awareness. Therefore, I hope that Korean Christian immigrant families' needs will be addressed with more culturally, psychologically, and theologically attuned care modalities and caregivers.

## Chapter 7

### Summary, Reflections, and Research

#### Summary of the Main Points

Why did I choose to write a feminist pastoral theology of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships? Simply stated, because this is my experience. The topic engages the struggles of life that I deal with every day. I am a Korean Christian immigrant parent. However, my passion to engage in this project stems not only from my personal struggles and desire to connect with my children. I have worked at Korean American churches for many years, and I still remember many Korean Christian immigrant families who shared with me their very personal, painful, and disconnected parent-child relationships. I still remember families who expressed a very strong desire to connect with each other.

I still remember one parent's cry for help: "My child has run away again. I know I should not have yelled at him. But, I couldn't help it. At first I came to this place to fix my son. Now, I really want to know what is going on with me. I feel crazy." This middle-aged Korean Christian immigrant father sobbed before me, and I sobbed too. I sobbed because I was deeply touched by his self-reflection which occurred over the course of a year. I sobbed because, at that time, I still did not know how I could help this suffering, struggling Korean Christian immigrant parent who juggled his confused cultural identities. He struggled with being a strong Korean father who desires to connect with his Americanized son and who cannot get along with his own strong Korean father. I also remember the mother's tears during that session. She was helpless in the struggle between the father and son. The only thing she could do was to try to meet her husband's

and her son's changing needs. Her only hope was praying to God, and she blamed herself for her not-good-enough faith. Her deep sighs and tears made me cry, too.

In addition to a desire to help such families to identify their resources and work on their issues, I felt strongly that somebody really should listen to and share with the world the voices of this marginalized group of people. Thus, within this dissertation, I aim to make their voices heard and to garner support and empowerment for them by the broader society. Therefore, I started this dissertation as a way to deliver the voices of marginalized Korean Christian immigrant families to academia, to introduce a more culturally sophisticated understanding of clinical treatment for them, so that theological stances, biblical interpretations, and even U.S. public policies, might change.

In this dissertation I introduced the core problem as disconnection between Korean Christian immigrant parents and their children. This relationship is influenced by some Korean cultural interpretations, immigration, and theological/biblical understandings of parenting. I used two sets of values, one from the Korean cultural tradition and the other from Relational Cultural Theory. They are *Hyo*, *Han*, *Jeong* and mutuality, vulnerability, and authenticity. Using these in an interrelating way, I created the following combined values from these two sets of six values: Mutual Respect (*Hyo* + Mutuality), Transformative Suffering (*Han* + Vulnerability), and Authentic *Jeong* (*Jeong* + Authenticity).

In order to explore and expand on these combined values, I reviewed literature from the social sciences, psychology, and pastoral care and counseling that relates to Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Based upon the review of the literature, I summarized the influences of Korean cultural tradition of *Hyo*, the changes



and dynamics in relation to immigration, and the role of Protestant Christianity upon Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. In particular, the Korean tradition of *Hyo* still impacts Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Also, immigration-related stress, challenges, acculturation issues, role changes, and status changes are all addressed, and there is a need to ease these challenges for Korean Christian immigrant families. So far, the majority of Korean Christian immigrant families belong to the Protestant immigrant church, which plays a critical role in their sense of spiritual, psychological, and social belonging. Therefore, the role of Korean cultural traditions, immigration, and Christianity were addressed and these influences were critically reflected upon for growth-fostering connection for the Korean Christian immigrant family.

Mutual Respect is the capacity for respecting each family member's rights and power. Transformative Suffering is the capacity of parents to face their own personal and collective *Han*, as well as to help their children to face their own *Han* so that the whole family can use their suffering experience as a way to be empathic and to grow toward deeper connection. Authentic *Jeong* is the capacity of each family member to support each others' individuation and be more attuned to respecting personal desires while remaining in the boundaries of the family as a unit.

Based upon this newly defined and established set of values, I then explored the importance of biblical interpretations of Genesis 22:1-19, known as "the story of Abraham's test." This story was read and understood as a story of *Hyo* for the traditional Korean Confucian Christian reader. However, depending on the context and position of the family and the family's power dynamics, this story can be read as a story of *Hyo*, *Han*,

and *Jeong*. Therefore, the importance of cultural location as related to biblical interpretation, along with the differences in interpretation resulting from social and familial location, were addressed. Also, at the end, there is a creative and imagined story of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac as if they were a Korean Christian immigrant family who face God's test. I invited the reader's imaginative participation to end this story by applying it to his or her own life situation. This imaginative Bible story helps to multiply the biblical interpretations for Korean Christian immigrant families by diversifying the image of God in a manner that could impact parent-child relationships. Also, these diversified and multiple images of God, parents, and self offer a liberating process for marginalized people to be free from the dominant U.S. culture's normative images of self and parents.

In Chapter Five, relative to fostering connection within the Korean Christian immigrant family, I argued the theological value of multiplicity. This chapter intends to bring out the importance of culturally and socially constructed truth claims; this dissertation is an attempt to deliver a partial, small, contextual claim of truth about the experiences of Korean Christian immigrant families. I based the discussion on the work of pastoral theologians Pamela Cooper-White, Mary Clark Moschella, and Andrew Sung Park, who help us see that God can be understood from a cultural perspective and thus inhabit multiple images, such as God of *Hyo*, God of *Han*, and God of *Jeong*, God of mutuality, God of vulnerability, and God of authenticity. Moreover, I added another layer of theological conversation by exploring the interrelating values of Mutual Respect, Transformative Suffering, and Authentic *Jeong* through dialogue with three U.S. pastoral theologians—Don S. Browning, Herbert Anderson, and Bonnie Miller-McLemore.

Overall, my focus in Chapter Five was to gain insight and wisdom for formulating theological reflections to enrich our pastoral understanding and practices with Korean Christian immigrant families as they seek to manage the challenges they face and grow.

In Chapter Six, I proposed a feminist pastoral theology of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. Based upon the arguments developed in previous chapters, I asserted that a feminist pastoral theology of connection for Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships desires interrelating, multiple, changing, fluid, and just connection. These aspects of connection are derived from my previous arguments regarding the value of Korean cultural traditions, postmodern theological anthropology, and my feminist theological value of liberating marginalized peoples. Then I proposed the three interrelating values—Mutual Respect (*Hyo* + Mutuality), Transformative Suffering (*Han* + Vulnerability), and Authentic *Jeong* (*Jeong* + Authenticity)—as examples of how we use and mix multicultural and multiple concepts in our lives. We do not have to choose either Korean or U.S. culture. Neither do we always have to seek a balance of the two. Separation and combinations of these two cultures organically occur. If we allow for this multiple possibility within us, we do not have to abide by a monolithic set of multicultural values. Therefore, I developed three sets of questions addressing interrelating values for pastoral care and pastoral counseling to be used creatively, flexibly, and contextually in the provision of pastoral care and counseling. These questions help Korean Christian immigrant parents and children to review their sense of authority, equality, mutuality, personal and collective *Han*, immigration-related suffering, sense of boundaries in the family, individuation among family members, and how they see connection between family members. These questions

will unfold their family culture so that they have a safe place to be heard, and healed, and to grow in connection. Thus, they eventually develop a sense of Authentic *Jeong* as an ethic of being a Korean Christian immigrant family.

Finally, I introduced the idea of pastoral care toward empowerment of and prevention of harm in Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. This approach involved developing the use of ritual, religious education, psychoeducational groups, and pastoral counseling. Particularly, for psychoeducational approaches and pastoral counseling, I combined interrelating values, Relational Cultural Theory's treatment model for ethnic minority clients, and Howard Clinebell's growth group counseling model. This approach is named relational cultural growth group/counseling.

#### Reflections, Recommendations, and Suggestions For Further Research

I have strong concerns as to how I can juggle all these different and multiple concepts. For the purpose of ongoing and rigorous academic work, I know I have eventually to delve into one or two topics and deeply engage them. However, why is it that I did not make a decision to do that in this project? Do I want to "have it all"? Instead of wanting to have it all, I used the dissertation as a space to talk about the human reality which causes us to deal with these multiple layers or aspects in our life. That way I can at least address at least one area of integration in our messy, complex, and multiple human realities.

Also, in my deep heart, I realize I have to speak about everything in order to discuss connection—how connection is difficult, complicated, and culturally, socially, theologically strenuous—with the all interwoven issues related to Korean Christian immigrant parent-child relationships. It is for this reason that I discussed and juggled all

the different concepts, regardless that they are challenging and difficult. Therefore, deepening each theoretical concept will not be accomplished in this research project. Rather, this project attempts to name and concretize these concepts, some more established and others still forming, that they may begin to be applied and integrated into practice.

Also, I theologically stand in a feminist position in a broad sense. Sometimes, I focus on a postmodern approach, other times I rely on my feminist pastoral reflection method. I am aware of the differences and diversity among feminist theologians and philosophers. This diversity might distract the readers' understanding of the theoretical and philosophical presuppositions of my argument at times. However, it is also the stance that I chose to take for this project.

As well, I wish I had spent more time and energy using the sets of questions that I developed for Korean Christian immigrant family's education and therapy. I did have the chance to put some into practice; however, given the opportunity to use those questions in more depth and breadth, and to interact with the responses, would offer greater reliability to my proposed suggestions. Therefore, a qualitative research project engaging Korean Christian immigrant families might serve as a logical next step for research.

Last, I wish I could have done research regarding the U.S. public policy-making process and its relation to multiculturalism in the United States. Though I shared one clinical vignette in Chapter Six, I still want to investigate more the child abuse laws in the United States, with attention to how officials assess child abuse and by what cultural standards. I have often observed the necessity for the protection of children's well-being and rights, as well as for the protection of immigrant parents well-being and rights.

Eventually, we may discover how we can serve better the people who are not grounded in the ways of living, relating, and disciplining in dominant U.S. culture and work to amend U.S. public policy to take into account the reality of multiple ways of living, relating, and disciplining. But such research begs the larger question: how can we use authoritative power to help the family? This leads me to think about how to communicate effectively with U.S. policymakers from a multicultural perspective. Finally, how can these concepts be used for developing, not just helping, a connection not only for bicultural families but for a broader community like a church, an organization, and even within national leadership? There are numerous contexts that need to think about the importance of harmony amid bi- and multi-cultural value systems.

Therefore I will make some suggestions for future research. First, I would like to set apart each concept as a separate project. For example, for my next project, I would like to research more about *Hyo* and mutuality, and use qualitative interviews with Korean Christian immigrant families and with community leaders, for leadership development.

Second, I would like to develop a set of questions that people can use in the settings of education, therapy, preaching, and workshops. These questions would be used to create a safe space for real people's lives and to develop connection among the members of multicultural communities. Family is a miniature of the broader community. Therefore, this exploration into connection within Korean Christian immigrant families may be applicable to other multicultural families and to the larger multicultural community.

Third, I would like to create a set of questions for church and community leaders in general, as well as for community leaders who are involved in the public policy-making process. I would like to interview them about how they understand the importance of multicultural values for their leadership and policy-making.

Fourth, this project has led me to have an interest in how church congregations and their leaders understand the image of God in relation to their cultural locations. It might require another analytical review or a combination of both theoretical review and interview process.

## Bibliography

- Anderson, Herbert, Edward Foley, Bonnie Miller-McLemore, and Robert Schreiter, eds.  
*Mutuality Matters: Family, Faith, and Just Love*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004.
- Baumrind, Diana. "Effective Parenting During the Early Adolescent Transition." In *Family Transitions*, edited by P.A. Cowan and E.M. Hetherington. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1991.
- Brock, Rita Nakashima. "A Little Child Will Lead Us: Christology and Child Abuse." In *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, edited by Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn, 42-61. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1990.
- Billman, Kathleen D. "Pastoral Care as an Art of Community." In *The Arts of Ministry: Feminist-Womanist Approaches*, ed. Christie Cozad Neuger, 10-38. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.
- Butler, Lee H, Jr. *A Loving Home: Caring for African American Marriage and Families*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2000.
- Browning, Don S. *Equality and the Family: A Fundamental Practical Theology of Children, Mothers, and Fathers in Modern Societies*. Grand Rapids: Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007.
- , Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, Pamela D. Couture, K. Brynolf Lyon, and Robert M. Franklin. *From Culture Wars to Common Ground: Religion and the American Family Debate*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.
- Card, Claudia. "Gender and Moral Luck." In *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics*, edited by Virginia Held, 79-100. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995.
- Cha, Debra. "Korean American Parenting Style Across Different Age Groups." Ph.D. diss., Alliant International University, 2007.
- Cha, Stephan S. "Religious Socialization in Korean American Families: Changing Patterns over Generalizations." Ph.D. diss., Trinity International University, 2003.
- Cho, Anna. "The Relationship between Maternal Stress and Mothers' Perceptions of their Preschool Children's Social Behaviors: A Cross-Cultural Study of Immigrant Korean Mothers in the United States and Korean Mothers in Korea." Ph.D. diss., University of North Texas, 2007.
- Choe, Young-Ho. "Early Korean Immigration." In *From the Land of Hibiscus*, edited by Young-Ho Choe, 11-40. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2009.



- Chodorow, Nancy. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.
- Choi, Injae. 한국형 부모 자녀 관계 척도 개발 및 타당화 연구 [A Study about Korean Scale for Parent-child Relationship and Its Adequacy]. Seoul: Korean Institute for Youth Development, 2006.
- Choi, Sang-Chin. 한국인 심리학 [Korean Psychology]. Seoul: Jung Ang University Press, 2007.
- Chung, Heesung. "An Exploration of a Feminist Pastoral Method from the Perspective of a Korean Woman." *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 46-58.
- Chung, Hyun Kyung. *Struggle to Be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women's Theology*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1990.
- Clinebell, Howard J., Jr. *Growth Groups*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1977.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Growth Counseling: Hope-Centered Methods of Actualizing Human Wholeness*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979.
- Cooper-White, Pamela. *The Cry of Tamar: Violence against Women and the Church's Response*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Many Voices: Pastoral Psychotherapy in Relational and Theological Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Com/plicated Woman: Multiplicity and Relationality across Gender and Culture." In *Women Out of Order: Risking Change and Creating Care in a Multicultural World*, edited by Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner and Teresa Snorton, 7-21. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010.
- Culp, Kristine A. *Vulnerability and Glory: A Theological Account*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.
- Deater-Deckard, Kirby D. *Parenting Stress*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Desai, Lisa. *Relationality Theory in a South Asian Context: An Example of the Dynamics of Identity Development*. Work in Progress, no. 86. Wellesley, Mass.: Stone Center, Wellesley Center for Women, Wellesley College, 1999.
- Doehring, Carrie. *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.

- . “A Method of Feminist Pastoral Theology.” In *Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology*, edited by Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Brita L. Gill-Austern, 95-112. Nashville: Abingdon, 1999.
- Dooley, Cate and Nikki M. Fedele. “Mothers and Sons: Raising Relational Boys.” In *The Complexity of Connection*, edited by Judith V. Jordan et al., 220-248. New York: Guilford Press, 2004.
- Dube, Musa W. *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*. St Louis: Chalice Press, 2000.
- Erkut, Sumru. *Diversity in Racial and Ethnic Self-Identification*. Work in Progress (Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies), no. 264. Wellesley, Mass.: Stone Center, Wellesley Center for Women, Wellesley College, 1999.
- , Fern Marx, Jaqueline P. Fields, and Rachel Sing. *Raising Confident and Competent Girls: Implication for Diversity*. Work In Progress (Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies), no. 289. Wellesley, Mass: Stone Center, Wellesley Center for Women, Wellesley College, 1998.
- French, John R. P., Jr., and Bertran Raven. “The Basis of Social Power.” In *Studies in Social Power*, edited by Dorwin Cartwright, 150-167. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1959.
- Freud, Sigmund. “The Ego and the Id.” In *The Freud Reader*, edited by Peter Gay, 631-645. New York: W.W. Norton, 1989.
- Friedman, Marilyn. “Beyond Caring: The De-Moralization of Gender.” In *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics*, edited by Virginia Held, 61-78. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995.
- Fuligni, Nadrew J. and Hirokazu Yoshikawa. “Socioeconomic Resources, Parenting, and Child Development among Immigrant Families.” In *Socioeconomic Status, Parenting, and Child Development*, edited by Marc H. Bornstein and Robert H. Bradley, 107-124. Mahwah, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003.
- Gill-Austern, Brita L. “Love Understood as Self-Sacrifice and Self Denial: What Does It Do to Women?” In *Through the Eyes of Women: Insights for Pastoral Care*, edited by Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner, 310-315. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.
- Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Greider, Kathleen J. *Much Madness is Divinest Sense: Wisdom in Memoirs of Soul-Suffering*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2007.

- Gudorf, Christine E. "Sacrificial and Parental Spiritualities." In *Religion, Feminism, and the Family*, edited by Anne Carr and Mary Stuart Van Leeuwen. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.
- Guignon, Charles. "Authenticity and Integrity: A Heideggerian Perspective." In *The Psychology of Mature Spirituality: Integrity, Wisdom, Transcendence*, edited by Polly Young-Eisendrath and Melvin E. Miller, 62-74. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Harris, Maria. *Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989.
- Hertig, Young Lee. *The Cultural Tug of War: The Korean Immigrant Family and Church in Transition*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2001.
- Hess, Carol Lakey. "Education as an Art of Getting Dirty with Dignity." In *The Arts of Ministry: Feminist-Womanist Approaches*, edited by Christie Cozad Neuger, 60-87. Louisville, Ky.; Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.
- Hurh, Won Moo. *The Korean Americans*. Westport, Conn. Greenwood Press, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Kwang Chung Kim. "Religious Participation of Korean Immigrants in the United States." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 29, no. 1 (1990): 19-34.
- Jensen, David H. *Graced Vulnerability: A Theology of Childhood*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2005.
- Joh, Wonhee Anne. *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.
- Jordan, Judith V. "Empathy and Self Boundaries." In *Women's Growth in Connection*, edited by Judith V. Jordan et al., 67-80. New York: Guilford Press, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Meaning of Mutuality." In *Women's Growth in Connection*, edited by Judith V. Jordan et al., 81-96. New York: Guilford Press, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "A Relational Perspective for Understanding Women's Development." In *Women's Growth in Diversity*, edited by Judith V. Jordan et al., 288-310. New York: Guilford Press, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Valuing Vulnerability: New Definitions of Courage*. Work in Progress (Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies), no. 95. Wellesley, Mass.: Stone Center, Wellesley Center for Women, Wellesley College, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Janet L. Surrey and Alexandra G. Kaplan. "Women and Empathy: Implications for Psychological Development and Psychotherapy." In *Women's Growth in Connection*, edited by Judith V. Jordan et al., 27-50. New York: Guilford Press, 1991.

- Kang, Namsoon. "Confucian Familialism and Its Social/Religious Embodiment in Christianity: Reconsidering the Family Discourse from a Feminist Perspective." *Asia Journal of Theology* 18, no. 1 (April 2004): 168-189.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Out of Places: Asian Feminist Theology of Dislocation." In *Out of Place*, edited by Clive Pierce and Jione Hevea. Cross Cultural Series. London: Equinox, forthcoming.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Re-Constructing Asian Feminist Theology: Toward Glocal Feminist Theology in an Era of Neo-Empire(s)." In *Christianity in Asia*, edited by Sebastian Kim. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Transit Home Away from Home." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 21, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 123-126.
- Kang, S. Steve. "The Socioculturally Constructed Multivoiced Self as a Framework for Christian Education of Second-Generation Korean American Young Adults," *Religious Education* 97, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 81-96.
- Kapalka, George M. *Parenting Your Out of Control Child: An Effective, Easy to Use Program for Teaching Self Control*. Oakland, Calif.: New Harbinger Publications, 2007.
- Keller, Catherine. *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism, and Self*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986.
- Kierkegaard, Søren. "Problem I: Is There a Teleological Suspension of The Ethical?" In *Kierkegaard: Fear and Trembling*, edited by C. Stephen Evans and Sylvia Walsh, translated by Sylvia Walsh, 46-59. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Kim, Ae Ra. *Women Struggling For a New Life: The Role of Religion in the Cultural Passage from Korea to America*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.
- Kim, Heayoung. "한국 가족의 재고-친밀성의 부재와 허약한 가족 관계" [A Revisit to Korean Family Culture]. *Health and Social Welfare Forum* 5 (2006): 20-34.
- Kim, Ilpyong J. "A Century of Korean Immigration to the United States: 1903-2003." In *Korean-Americans: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Ilpyong J. Kim. Elizabeth, N.J.: Hollym International, 2004.
- Kim, Ji-Young and Sang-Chin Choi, "A Qualitative Study for Hyo-Shim Psychology of Korean Women [여성의 효심에 관한 질적인 접근 분석]," *The Korean Journal of Women's Psychology*, no. 1 (2003): 49-67.
- Kim, Jung Ha. *Bridge-Makers and Cross-Bearers: Korean American Women and the Church*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997.

- Kim, Kwang Chung and Shin Kim. "The Ethnic Roles of Korean Immigrant Churches in the United States." In *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore*, edited by Ho-Youn Kwon, Kwang Chung Kim, and R. Stephen Warner, 71-93. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001.
- Kim, Nami. "The 'Indigestible' Asian: The Unifying Term 'Asian'." In *Off the Menu: Asian and Asian North American Women's Religion and Theology*, edited by Rita Nakashima Brock, Jung Ha Kim, Kwok Pui-Lan, and Seung Ai Yang, 23-44. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.
- Kim, Matthew D. Possible Selves: A Homiletic for Second Generation Korean American Churches." *Homiletic* 32, no. 1 (Summer 2007): 1-17.
- Kim, Seongeun et al. "Reconstructing Mothering among Korean Immigrant Working Class Women in the United States." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 37, no. 1(2006): 43-58.
- Kim, Sunkwon, Kyungsup Chang, Hyunsong Lee, Aeju Cho, and Inju Song, "한국 가족의 변화와 대응방안" [Response to the Changes of Korean Family]. *Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs*, 2000 Research Report (2000): 1-10.
- Kim, Susan. "Changes and Continuities in Second Generation Korean American Families." Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2007.
- Kim, Taeho. "An Analysis of Financial Crisis Handling: Lessons from the Korean Experience 1." *Management International Review* 39 (1999): 27-51
- Kim, Wansuk. "A Diagnosis: The Meaning of The Human Body in the Past and the Present [진단: 전통 속의 몸 vs. 현대의 몸]." Webzine, July, 2003.  
<http://www.lgad.co.kr/webzine/030708/edition2.asp> (accessed October 16, 2010)
- Kimmel, Tim. *High Cost of High Control: How to Deal with Powerful Personalities*. Scottsdale, Ariz.: Family Matters, 2005.
- Kohlberg, Lawrence. *The Psychology of Moral Development: The Nature and Validity of Moral Stages*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984.
- Kwon, Heesun and Carrie Doehring. "Spiritual Resources Used by Korean Victims of Domestic Violence." *Journal of Pastoral Psychology* 14, no 2 (Fall 2004): 70-86.
- Kwon, Ho-Youn, Kwang Chung Kim, and R. Stephen Warner. "Korean American Religion in International Perspective." In *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore*, edited by Ho-Youn Kwon, Kwang Chung Kim, and R. Stephen Warner, 1-24. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001.

Kwok, Pui-Lan. *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2000.

———. “Doing Theology from Third World Women’s Perspective.” In *Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader*, edited by Ursula King, 63-76.. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1994.

Kwon, Soo Young. “How Do Korean Rituals Heal?: Healing of Han as Cognitive Property,” *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 14, no.1 (Spring 2004): 31-45.

——— and Anthony Duc Le. “Relationship Building in Clinical Pastoral Education: A Confucian Reflection from Asian Chaplains.” *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling* 58, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 203-214.

Lantieri, Linda. *Building Emotional Intelligence: Techniques to Cultivate Inner Strength of Children*. Boulder, Colo.: Sounds True, 2008.

Lartey, Emmanuel Y. *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003.

Lee, Brian. “Confucian Ideals and American Values.” In *Korean-Americans: Past, Present, and Future*, edited by Ilpyong J. Kim, 273-77. Elizabeth, N.J.: Hollym International Corp., 2004.

Lee, Eun-Bong. “현대 사회에서 효의 실용성에 관련된 몇가지 문제 [The Practicality of Hyo in a Modern Society].” *종교연구* [Religious Study] 26 (Spring 2002): 1-23.

Lee, Eun Sun. 유교의 효 윤리와 기독교의 책임 윤리 [Hyo as Confucian Ethics and Christian Ethics of Responsibility].” In 유교, 기독교, 그리고 페미니즘 [Confucianism, Christianity, and Feminism]. Seoul: Jisiksanupsa, 2003.

———. “유교적 자아 실현과 서구 현대 발달 심리학의 교육 철학 [Confucian Self Actualization and Educational Philosophy of Western Modern Developmental Psychology].” In 한국 교육 철학의 새 지평 [A New Horizon for Korean Educational Philosophy], 285-324. Incheon: Nailulyununcheck, 2000.

Lee, Jacob Hee Cheol. “Shame and Pastoral Care: Implications from an Asian Theological Perspective.” *Pastoral Psychology* 57, no. 5-6 (2009): 253-262.

Lee, Jae Hoon. *The Exploration of The Inner Wounds—Han*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994.

Lee, Jung Young. *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.

- Lee, K. "Patterns of Night Waking and Crying of Korean Infants from 3 Months to 2 Years Old and Its Relation with Various Factors." *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics* 13 (1992): 326-330.
- Lee, K. Samuel. "Becoming Multicultural Dancers: The Pastoral Practitioner in a Multicultural Society." *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 55, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 389-395.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Korean American Cultural Identifications: Effect on Mental Stress and Self Esteem." Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Navigating between Cultures: The Bicultural Family's Lived Realities." In *Mutuality Matters: Family, Faith, and Love*, edited by Herbert Anderson et al., 107-17. Lanham: Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004.
- Lee, Kye-Hak. "한국인의 전통가정교육사상의 현재적 조명-효와 엄부자모을 중심으로 [A Contemporary Review on Korean Traditional Thoughts on Family-Regarding Hyo and Eom Bu Ja Mo]." 한국 아동학회 춘계 학술 발표 [Korean Child Studies Spring Conference Presentation] (1995), 3-44.
- Lee, Sang-Im. 효의 의미:공자와 아리스토텔레스의 비교 [The Meaning of Hyo; Comparison of Confucius and Aristotle], 도교학 연구 [ Taoism Studies] , no. 17 (2001): 203-223.
- Lee, Yoon Sun. "Korean Child Rearing Practice in the United States: An Ethnographic Study of Korean Immigrants in the Cultural Transition." Ph.D. diss., The Faculty of the School of Education International and Multicultural Program, 1999.
- McFague, Sallie. *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.
- Miller, Jean Baker. *Toward a New Psychology of Women*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_, et al. "Therapists' Authenticity." In *The Complexity of Connection*, edited by Judith V. Jordan et al., 64-89. New York: The Guilford Press, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Irene P. Stiver. "How Disconnections Happen in Families." In *The Healing Connection*, edited by Jean Baker Miller and Irene Pierce Stiver, 84-103. Boston: Beacon Press, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Irene P. Stiver. "Seeking Connection by Staying Out of Connection." In *The Healing Connection*, edited by Jean Baker Miller and Irene Pierce Stiver, 104-121. Boston: Beacon Press, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Judith V. Jordan. "Some Misconceptions and Reconceptions of a Relational Approach: Aren't You Idealizing Women? Aren't You Idealizing Relationship?" In *Women's Growth in Diversity*, edited by Judith V. Jordan, 25-49. New York: Guilford Press, 1997.

- Min, Pyong Gap and Dae Young Kim. "Intergenerational Transmission of Religion and Culture: Korean Protestants in the U.S." *Sociology of Religion* 66, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 263-282.
- Moschella, Mary Clark. *Living Devotions: Reflections on Immigration, Identity, and Religious Imagination*. Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications, 2008.
- Nauta, Reinard. "The Performance of Authenticity: Ordination and Profession in Pastoral Care." *Pastoral Psychology* 51, no. 5 (2003): 425-431.
- Park, Andrew Sung. *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "A Theology of Enchantment." *The Journal of Pastoral Theology* 13, no. 2 (Fall, 2003): 14-33.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Susan L. Nelson, *The Other Side of Sin: Woundedness from the Perspective of the Sinned Against*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001.
- Park, Youngshin and Euichul Kim. 한국의 청소년 문화와 부모자녀 관계-토착심리탐구 [Korean Adolescent Culture and Korean Parent-Child Relationship]. Seoul: Kyoukkwuhaksa, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. 한국인의 부모자녀 관계-자기개념과 가족역할 인식의 토착 심리 탐구 [Korean Parent-Child Relationship: A Native Psychological Research for Self-Concept and the Role of Korean Family]. Seoul: Kyoukkwuhaksa, 2004.
- Paulson, Daryl S. "The Search for Spiritual Authenticity." *Pastoral Psychology* 55, no. 2 (2006): 197-204.
- Ramshaw, Elaine. *Ritual and Pastoral Care*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1997.
- Redifield, R. et al. "Memorandum on the Study of Acculturation." *American Anthropologist* 38 (1936): 149-152. Cited by John W. Berry et al., "Assessment of Acculturation." In *Field Methods in Cross-Cultural Research*, edited by Walter J. Lonner and John W. Berry, 291-324. Beverly Hills, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 1986.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Womanguides: Readings toward a Feminist Theology*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1985.
- Russell, Letty M. *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.



- \_\_\_\_. "The Future of Feminist Theology: An Asian Perspective," In *Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader*, edited by Ursula King, 63-76. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1994.
- Saussy, Carroll. *God Images and Self Esteem: Empowering Women in a Patriarchal Society*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991.
- Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*. New York: Crossroad, 1983.
- Segovia, Fernando F. *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins*. Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 2000.
- Seo, Teasoo. "자녀 희생 효 설화를 통해 본 효행 주체 의식 [The Agency of Hyo from Reviewing Hyo Folktale of Child's Sacrifice] ." *청람어문학* [Chungram Munhak] 5 (1991): 1-32.
- Shapiron, Lawrence E. *How to Raise a Child with a High EQ: A Parents' Guide to Emotional Intelligence*. NY: Harper Perennial, 1997.
- Smith, Timothy. *The Danger of Raising Nice Kids: Preparing Our Children to Change Their World*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2006.
- Social Science Research Council. "Acculturation: An Exploratory Formulation." *American Anthropologist* 56 (1954): 973-1002. Cited by John W. Berry et al., "Assessment of Acculturation." In *Field Methods in Cross-Cultural Research*, edited by Walter J. Lonner and John W. Berry, 291-324.. Beverly Hills, Calif., SAGE Publications, 1986.
- Sölle, Dorothee. *The Window of Vulnerability: A Political Spirituality*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.
- Son, Angella. "Pastoral Care of Korean American Women: The Degeneration of Mothering into the Management of an Inadequate Sense of Self." In *Women Out of Order: Risking Change and Creating Care in a Multicultural World*, edited by Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner and Teresa Snorton, 57-69. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010.
- Son, Woonsan. "현대 가족의 모습과 목회 [Contemporary Family and Pastoral Care]" *목회와 상담* [Pastoral Care and Counseling] 1 (2001): 5-44.
- Song, Kyungsook. "Korean Community." In *Pan Asian Child Practices*, edited by Pan Asian Parent Education Project, 51-76. San Diego, Calif.: The Pan Asian Parent Project, 1982.
- Song, Young I. and Ailee Moon. *Korean American Women: From Tradition to Modern Feminism*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998.

- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty and Ellen Rooney. "In a Word: Interview." In *The Essential Difference*, edited by Naomi Schor and Elizabeth Weed, 151-184.. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994; reprinted in *Contemporary Literature Criticism*, edited by Jeffrey W. Hunter, vol. 233. Detroit: Gale, 2007. Available online in Gale's Literature Resource Center,  
[http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.libraries.claremont.edu/ps/i.do?&id=GALE%7CH1100075918&v=2.1&u=claremont\\_main&it=r&p=LitRC&sw=w](http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.libraries.claremont.edu/ps/i.do?&id=GALE%7CH1100075918&v=2.1&u=claremont_main&it=r&p=LitRC&sw=w) (accessed January 4: 2011).
- Stiver, Irene P. "Beyond the Oedipus Complex: Mothers and Daughters." In *Women's Growth in Connection*, edited by Judith V. Jordan et al., 97-121. New York: Guilford Press, 1991.
- . "The Meanings of 'Dependency' in Female-Male Relationships." In *Women's Growth in Connection*, edited by Judith V. Jordan et al., 143-161. New York: Guilford Press, 1991.
- Sugirtharajah, R.S. *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Takaki, Ronald. *Strangers from a Different Shore*. New York: Penguin Books, 1989.
- Trible, Phyllis. *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.
- Tu, Weiming. *Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought*. Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1979.
- Turner, Clewonne W. "Psychosocial Barriers to Black Women's Career Development." In *Women's Growth in Diversity*, edited by Judith V. Jordan et al., 162-175. New York: The Guilford Press, 1997.
- Walker, Maureen. *How Therapy Helps When the Culture Hurts*. Work in Progress (Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies), no. 95. Wellesley, Mass.: Stone Center, Wellesley Center for Women, Wellesley College, 2002.
- . "How Relationships Heal." In *How Connection Heals: Stories from Relational Cultural Therapy*, edited by Maureen Walker and Wendy B. Rosen, 3-21. New York: Guilford Press, 2004.
- . "Race, Self, and Society: Relational Challenges in a Culture of Disconnection." In *The Complexity of Connection*, edited by Judith V. Jordan et al., 129-146. New York: Guilford Press, 2004.
- Wimberly, E.P. "Growth Counseling." In *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, edited by Rodney J. Hunter, 483.. Nashville, Abingdon, 1990.
- Wolf, Anthony E. *The Secret of Parenting: How to be in Charge of Today's Kids-from Toddlers to Preteens-without Threats or Punishment*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000.

Wu, Shi-Juan. "Parenting in Chinese American Families." In *Culturally Diverse Parent-Child and Family Relationships*, edited by Nancy Boyed. 235-260. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

Yang, Yoo Sung. "Parental Authority in Korean-American Parent-Teen Relationships." Th.D. diss., Boston University, 1996.